Creations in London

Dance and Dancers

SEPTEMBER 1961 This month's full ballet guide 2s. 6d.

BELINDA WRIGHT and OLEG BRIANSKY

of London's Festival Ballet in Vladimir Bourmeister's production of *The Snow Maiden* at the Royal Festival Hall

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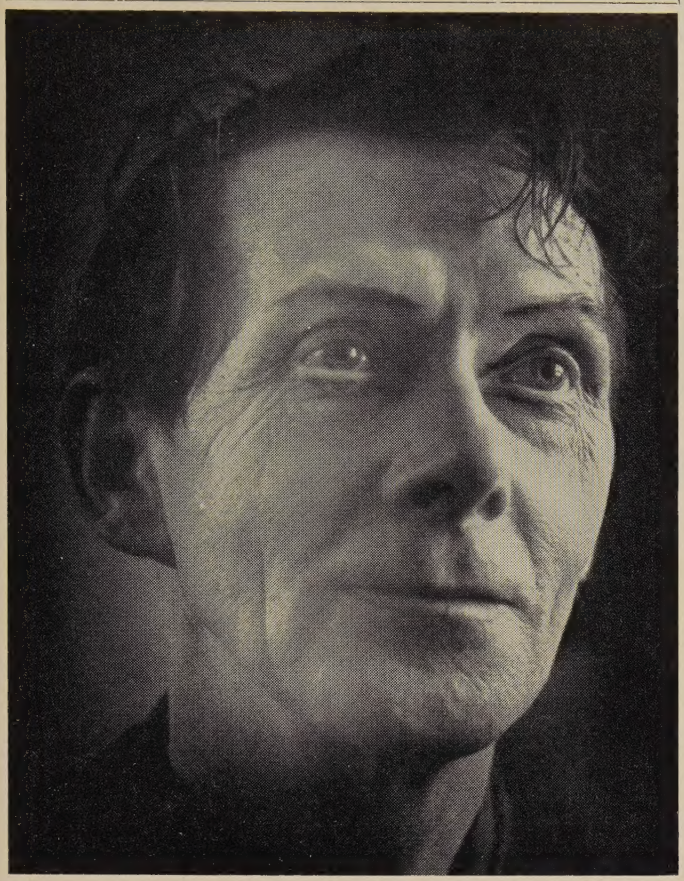

Photo : Lazlo Szilvassy

WALTER GORE

WALTER GORE is quite obviously among the most difficult people to write about in British ballet. Brilliant and distinguished, both as a dancer and as a choreographer, he has a place among the first great pioneers of ballet in this country, listed with Markova, Ashton, Dolin, Turner, Tudor and the rest. First as a dancer, later as a choreographer, he was a mainstay of the Ballet Club and the post-war Ballet Rambert. Indeed, when he left Ballet Rambert in 1950 it seemed difficult to envisage how the company would ever get on without him, or for that matter how he would get on without the company, but both eventually prospered.

In 1952 he worked with the Ballets des Champs-Elysées, and went with his wife, Paula Hinton, to Australia. In 1953 he returned, to dance the Rake in *The Rake's Progress* for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and also to mount *Carte Blanche* for the same company. At the end of the year he formed his own company, the Walter Gore Ballet, which eventually broke up. After a further visit to Australia in 1955, his work has been almost exclusively on the Continent, particularly in Holland and Germany. From 1956 to 1958 he was Director of Ballet at Frankfurt, and also in 1958 he created *Night and Silence* for the Edinburgh Festival Ballet. This year he returned to Ballet Rambert as guest artist, with Paula Hinton, and the Rambert gave *Night and Silence* its first London performances. Also this year, his new company, London Ballet, gave its first performances at the Hintlesham Festival in July, before embarking on an autumn provincial tour.

Gore's career has been unusually rich and varied, yet so far the final distinction his merits would seem to deserve, has eluded him. As a dancer he was gifted with the most enormous range. His finely dramatic Albrecht in *Giselle* proved one of the most imaginative of post-war portrayals of the part, while when he returned to dance De Valois' Rake he produced what many regard as the finest character performance ever given by a British dancer. His own ballets have ranged from the passionately dramatic to the comically bizarre. Now with his new company perhaps he may find the permanent conditions that will enable him to do his best work as a choreographer and Artistic Director.

SEPTEMBER 1961 12th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 12 No. 9

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.

The Camp Followers

DURING the summer months of this year, London has had the opportunity of seeing some of the finest and most representative ballet from the world's leading countries — from Russia (the Kirov Ballet), from America (Jerome Robbins' Ballets U.S.A.) and from Britain (the Royal Ballet, Ballet Rambert and London's Festival Ballet). That other great ballet country, France, has not unfortunately been represented, possibly because they have nothing to send and their most famous choreographer, Roland Petit, has been relegated to celluloid and will be seen in this single dimension when the film of four of his ballets, called *Black Tights,* is shown at the London Coliseum in September. It has become increasingly clear as the summer months have worn on into early autumn that the London ballet public (and by this I mean those who attend regularly and then proclaim their opinions afterwards at private parties, in bars, in the press or on the streets), is dividing up into camps — and some are camper than others.

Now there is nothing wrong with honest-to-ballet fans, for ballet needs them as does every theatrical enterprise. Unfortunately this summer there has been a tendency for the appreciation of ballet's adherents to take a rather different turn. It appears that many people no longer appreciate ballet for ballet's sake — and after all good ballet is good ballet wherever it comes from and whoever is responsible for it — but for other reasons more sinister or what could become sinister if allowed to develop. Politics are starting to rear their ugly Hydra-like heads again and this is leading to the premise that because you like the ballet of one country and because your political sympathies are with that country, you do not like the ballet of another country whose politics are opposed to your beliefs.

Then another cardinal sin that is making itself felt is one of insularity — only British ballet is good and everything those dirty foreigners do, stinks. And this is leading to a form of internal insularity in which you remain faithful only to *one* of our established companies and the rest — yes, they stink too.

Perhaps it is not too late to remind you that the one great quality the art of ballet has, or had, above all other theatrical arts is its international appeal which was above all political ideals or geographical frontiers — together with music and painting it has been an art with a common language that could be understood everywhere. If ballet ever becomes involved in political differences, then the quicker the whole thing is ended the better. When it comes to internal matters, then for heaven's sake let us look at and appreciate our companies for what they are and what they are trying to do.

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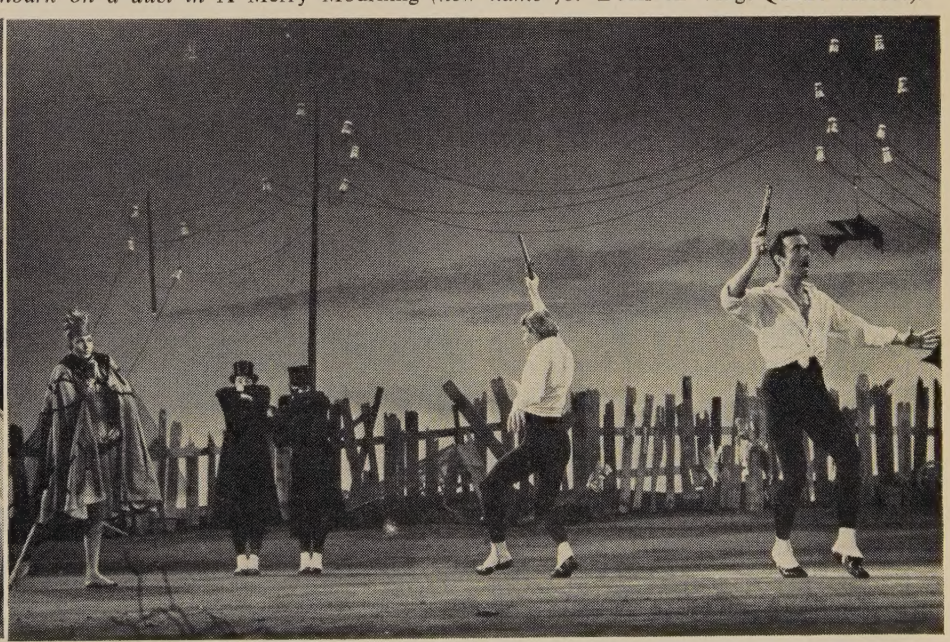
THE CRUNCHER AND CARMEN: Left, Zizi Jeanmaire and Dirk Sanders in a scene from The Diamond Cruncher. *Right, Zizi Jeanmaire with Roland Petit in the bedroom scene from* Carmen.

Old Favourites in "Black Tights"

IT was from Paris that the first foreign ballet visitors came to visit London just after the last World War. The creative genius behind it all was Roland Petit, first seen in London with Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées and later with his own company — Ballets de Paris. It was in London, at the Princes Theatre, that his ballet *Carmen* first burst on to a rather astonished world — and it continued to astonish the world for some time after that. This was principally on account of its sensuous vitality, its wonderful Clavé décor and for Zizi Jeanmaire's portrayal of the title rôle. This ballet and several which followed, brought excitement and elegance to post-war ballet.

Today, Petit's Ballets de Paris makes only very sporadic reappearances and it is possible that many of the ballets may never be seen again. However, four of the Petit ballets have been filmed in Paris, in Super-Technirama and Technicolor, and the result will be seen in the film *Black Tights* which London sees when it opens at the London Coliseum on September 4. The programme consists of shortened versions of — *La Croqueuse de Diamants* (re-named *The Diamond Cruncher)* with Jeanmaire and Dirk Sanders; *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Moira Shearer and Petit; and *Deuil en Vingt-Quatre Heures* (re-named *A Merry Mourning)* with Cyd Charisse and Petit. The second part of the programme is taken up with the complete version of *Carmen* with Jeanmaire and Petit in the rôles they created.

DUELS VARIOUS: Left, Roland Petit as Cyrano and Moira Shearer as Roxane in a scene from Cyrano de Bergerac. *Right, Cyd Charisse watches her husband about to embark on a duel in* A Merry Mourning *(new name for* Deuil en Vingt-Quatre Heures).



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The Snow Maiden

First given by London's Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on July 17, 1961. Ballet in three acts adapted from Alexander Ostrovsky by Vladimir Bourmeister. Choreographed and produced by Vladimir Bourmeister assisted by Antonina Kroupenina. Music by Tchaikovsky. Designed by Yuri Piminov and Gennady Epishin.

Cast

Snow Maiden ..... BELINDA WRIGHT
Father Frost ..... PETER WRIGHT
Mizgir ..... OLEG BRIANSKY
Kupava ..... MARILYN BURR
Leil ..... JELKO YURESHA
Bobyl ..... DONALD McALPINE
Bobiliha, his wife ..... ANNA DELANY
King Berendej ..... JOHN AULD
First Jester ..... RONALD EMBLEN
Vassilie, a leading village dancer VASSILIE TRUNOFF
His sweetheart ..... JOAN POTTER

Corps de Ballet of Snowflakes, Jesters, Village Girls and Village Boys

Acts 1 and 2 — In the Forest.
Act 3 — The outskirts of the Village of Berendeevka.

STORY

"THE Ballet is based on the following old Russian Fairy Tale :

" In a great dark wood, where the wind blew so cold, and the snow fell, lived Father Frost and his daughter Snow Maiden. She was not afraid, as she was herself made of snow. As the snow blew strongly round her she played with the snowflakes. She loved to dance with them and especially enjoyed pretending to ride with them on an imaginary troika. Very often Father Frost had to grumble to Snow Maiden and the snowflakes because they would not let him sleep quietly. However, they were not afraid of him and would start all over again as soon as he left to return home.

" One evening while playing thus, Snow Maiden heard a human song. Never before had she seen a human being, and when she heard the song she hid in the trees for she was interested to know what it was all about. Snow Maiden saw Mizgir with Kupava and for the first time saw human love. She liked Mizgir so much that she wanted to kiss and caress him. So she decided to leave the forest and go to live in the village.

" Father Frost was very angry, and did his best to persuade her not to go. He warned her that when the sun came out, her end would come. Despite all his pleadings, she ran away to the village.

" She loved Mizgir very much, and lived with the humans, learning to sing their songs and to dance their dances. When Mizgir saw her, he also loved her so very deeply that he forgot his Kupava.

" Kupava was very angry, and ran to tell the King the whole story. The King was very cross and put Mizgir on trial, but when he saw the beautiful Snow Maiden, he so liked her that he agreed that they could marry.

" Snow Maiden, enchanted with her new-found happiness, did not realise that the sun was coming out, and when she wanted to run to the forest, could not leave her beloved, and so melted away."

PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

WERE I the man to make resolutions — which I am not — I would here and now resolve never again to use the word " old-fashioned ". What does it mean when applied to works of art ? What are these fashions which it is out of ? Who sets them, and why ? Is the opposite to " old-fashioned " to be " fashionable ", and is this any better ? Do works of art go in and out of fashion (" No dear, I only listen to Mahler when there's an ' r ' in the month ") and if they do, does it matter ? How does one *know* what is fashionable or what is not ? (" Tell me, sweetie, is Green IN this summer, or screamingly OUT ? ") Does any other species of man, besides us poor struggling ballet critics, use the term " old-fashioned " as our mushroom-shaped insult, our ultimate deterrent of abuse ? Couturiers perhaps, interior decorators maybe, but anyone else ?

This whole business of " IN " and " OUT " finds me terribly confused. (For example quite recently I watched with my own three ears, Jerome Robbins' interesting ballet *Events* enter an audience IN, yet emerge OUT after the space of only a week !) Yet even I had no doubt about Bourmeister's *The Snow Maiden.* At one glance, or less, I could tell it was OUT, and, Brother, it was not way-out, it was square. It was based on a fairy-story by Ostrovsky, and the only fairy-stories that are currently IN are those written by Ronald Firbank. IN fact — it was more than square, it was village-square, which is the same as provincial. C'est la vie, as those clever French say.

Let us, however, forget about labels and look at things. *The Snow Maiden* is the first new ballet ever to be commissioned from Soviet artists by a Western company. It is only the ninth multi-act ballet ever to be created by a British company. For Festival Ballet to undertake such a venture was, to put it mildly, enterprising, possibly the more so when one considers the dismal backlog of failures the company has had with its creations over recent years. Had it flopped — and I mean had it flopped

SNOW MAIDEN ENTRY : With Snowflakes representing a troika, Belinda Wright is drawn on by Gillian Shane, Jeannette Minty, Janet Kedge and Diane Westerman. Photo : Anthony Crickmay

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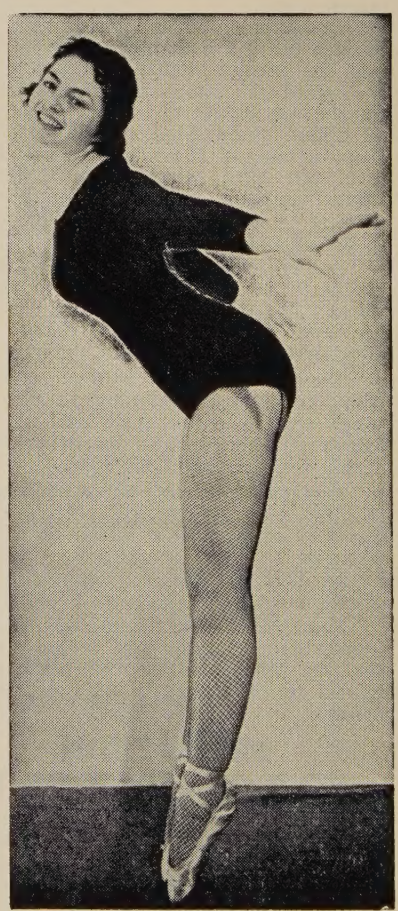

SNOW MAIDEN AT HOME: Borne aloft by Father Frost (Peter White), the Snow Maiden (Belinda Wright) is surrounded by her friends, the Snowflakes. *Photo: Anthony Crickmay*

with those happy Philistines the public rather than the critics — it would almost certainly have killed the company stone dead. The company was taking a calculated risk. It was playing a form of Russian roulette.

The choice of Vladimir Bourmeister as choreographer was an interesting one. Until ill-health forced his retirement, Bourmeister was principal choreographer to the ballet company of Moscow's Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre, and had had some success with his ballets in the West, when that company came to Paris five years ago. Furthermore, apart from Asaf Messerer, Bourmeister is the only Soviet choreographer ever to have worked with a Western company, for last year he mounted his celebrated production of *Swan Lake* on the Paris Opéra Ballet.

The work he showed in Paris was for the most part fairly dramatic. His choice for Festival Ballet — and it *was* Bourmeister's choice — was this slight Russian folk-tale to Tchaikovsky. I suspect that Bourmeister's decision was dictated by a desire to be contemporary, for strangely enough — and this is where fashionable judgement goes haywire — neoclassicism seems to be very much IN at the moment in Russia. I suppose no one thought to tell him that it was only IN here if it had no story attached to it.

Admittedly the Ostrovsky story is not that good for ballet, primarily because it lacks tension and human interest. A heroine who melts at the first touch of the sun makes a sweet Spring myth, but inevitably the story lacks any quality of surprise. And melting innocence sounds all very well in a novel, but when the melting is taken as literally as this, it needs an unduly tortuous soul to identify itself with the symbolism.

Nor has Bourmeister helped himself with the actual structure of the ballet. Originally cast in three somewhat short acts, the snow scenes seemed unduly prolonged. After almost a complete act of snowy maidens blizzarding their way across the rectangular tundra of the Festival Hall stage, it came as a disappointment to find the beginning of the second act was dramatically little more than a reprise of the first, and the story seemed snow-bound. The peasants intervened not a moment too soon.

After the first two or three performances, the shape of the ballet was greatly improved by omitting the first interval and playing it as a two acter. But, in a sense, this only emphasised the thin-ice of the story. Nothing *vital* can happen until the sun rises, and once the sun has risen the ballet must of necessity trickle away with its heroine. Perhaps the Leningrad choreographer Leonid Jacobsen was right when he restricted his *Snow Maiden* to a brief solo, not starting his "choreographic miniature" until he was ready to end it.

Do you remember Mrs. Organ Morgan in Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood,* who was: "A martyr to music." Ballet so often is not only a "martyr to music" but also a "martyr to literature", to say nothing of painting, and the deficiencies of Bourmeister's libretto must not be allowed to completely obscure the quality of his choreography, even while they detract from it.

The choreography for the snow-maidens has been given a crystalline beauty I find very attractive. Bourmeister has cleverly caught the swirling, eddying movement of snow, and he maintains this movement style with remarkable consistency. There is a pleasingly unforced quality to his invention, although his choreography is far from conventional. On the other hand it must be admitted that the very evenness of his snow does tend to pile up somewhat, and occasionally forms drifts, partly because there is little more frustrating than avowedly narrative choreography deprived of incident. Some of it is bound to appear as padding or marking time, and it seems a pity that Bourmeister could not have introduced a stronger element of anecdote into it. Where he does, such as when the Snow Maiden and her friends pretend to be a *troika,* the choreography takes on a more vivid aspect,

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The human scenes, while less original, and even less interesting, are probably more entertaining. The first *pas de deux* for the hero Mizgir and his human lover, Kupava, is gentle, honest and full of feeling, with a nice sense of love in a cold climate. Russian character dancing is part of Bourmeister's heritage, and he uses it with imagination and resource. He mingles the straightforward character dances for the villagers, with choreography for five jesters which has a rather more demi-caractère flavour, while the dances for Mizgir and Kupava are in that "folk-classical" style that Soviet choreographers seem to use so adroitly.

As a production, its first performances lacked something in forcefulness, particularly in the ballet's final minutes. While the Snow Maiden's last solo ("Lady into Lake", perhaps) is conveyed expressively, and her disappearance well-handled, Mizgir's suicide seems a strangely puny moment, surprisingly lacking in drama. Also, if the story is to have any meaning, I feel the ending should express very strongly the coming of Spring, with all that implies to the villagers.

The ballet undoubtedly has faults, yet these are outweighed by its virtues, and I think it will be extremely useful in the Festival Ballet repertory. It is easily the most ambitious, and probably the most successful of all Festival Ballet's completely new creations. For about five years people have been talking about Anglo-Soviet co-operation in ballet. Now at last someone has done something about it.

DANCING

THE performances of *Snow Maiden* posed a paradox. After all the work of Léon Woizikowsky and Charles Dickson, together with the undoubted inspiration of working with Bourmeister, the company as a whole was probably dancing better than it ever has before. Yet at the same time it is not a Russian company, and it has yet to discover the peculiar secret of Soviet dancers which enables them to give choreography such as Bourmeister's with all the simple, yet authoritative, grandeur that it demands. Nevertheless the contrast between the company's style and morale this season and last is so marked that its future has never looked brighter.

Belinda Wright, the first of the four Snow Maidens during the season, danced quite well in a somewhat brittle fashion, but for me her characterisation was altogether too sweetly cloying and too twee. Far more interesting to my mind, was Irina Borowska's performance, who played it more as a classical ballerina and less as a soubrette. She aimed at being girlish rather than childish, and this was much to the part's advantage. She also brought considerable poignancy to the last scene, while her dancing had moments of nobility, even though occasionally spoilt by a somewhat inexpressive back and a slight tendency to hunch her shoulders.

The third of the Snow Maidens, Dianne Richards, proved something of a cross between Wright and Borowska. Her interpretation was less attractive than Borowska's, and it too had a touch of affectation about it, even though she was quite moving at the end. Her dancing, on the other hand, was probably the best of the three, with an elegant neatness of technique. The Gaye Fulton cast I have not yet seen and will write about next month.

Of the three Mizgir's, undoubtedly Oleg Briansky looked the best, and he partnered Wright with commendable ease. His dancing, however, seemed earthbound and lacked vitality, and it was left to the young Paul Comelin (partnering Dianne Richards) to give the rôle the vigour it demanded. His characterisation, as a mixture of prince and peasant, was also attractive. Michael Maule, Borowska's partner, made little impression and danced unexcitingly.

Of the first two Kupava's, Marilyn Burr was the preferable. She used her forceful technique to good advantage, and her acting was spirited. Deirdre O'Conaire showed a clean-limbed classicism that seemed less appropriate to the part.

One of the principal merits of all the performances has been the very high standard of character dancing, especially from the boys. Vassilie Trunoff is, of course, a tower of strength, brilliant, extrovert and stylish, but other good dancing has also come from Jelko Yuresha and William Perrie, alternating as Leil, Donald McAlpine as Bobyl and from the Jesters — Hendrik Davel, Desmond Kelly, Gale Law and Alan Woodard, led with bouncy *brio* by the splendid Ronald Emblen.

Among the mime rôles I thought John

ENTER THE MORTALS: Mizgir (Oleg Briansky) dances with his fiancée, Kupava (Marilyn Burr) in the first act.
Photo: Anthony Crickmay

PLAYFUL SNOW: Above the Snow Maiden (Wright) with Father Frost (White). Below, the Snowflakes dance with Janet Kedge doing a grand jeté.

Photos: Anthony Crickmay

Auld was best as Father Frost, and Peter White as King Berendej, who performed the reverse parts on the first night. Among the Snowflake friends, the precise Jeannette Minty and high-jumping Janet Kedge were probably the best.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

BY no means all Tchaikovsky's music is "popular" in the general sense, even among the major works. How many readers have actually heard a performance of the first three symphonies, for example, or the Second and Third Piano Concertos? Among these in 15 years of pretty assiduous listening I myself have heard the Third Symphony and Second Piano Concerto once each in live performance, the rest not at all. So it is hardly surprising to find that amid the Tchaikovsky music still unfamiliar to us is all but a few sections of *Snow Maiden* in the new Bourmeister version, and enough and to spare for several more three-act ballets if required. At the same time, it is evident that much lesser-known Tchaikovsky has been forgotten simply because it does not represent the composer at his best.

His original *Snow Maiden* score was composed in 1873 as incidental music for a production of Ostrovsky's play at the Bolshoi Theatre. It has long since been eclipsed by Rimsky-Korsakov's opera on the same subject (called *Snegourochka),* and when a version was produced for the Kirov Ballet it used an altogether different score made up of well-known Tchaikovsky themes arranged by the ubiquitous Asafiev. Only when the Bolshoi Ballet School presented a two-act *Snow Maiden* in 1947 was Tchaikovsky's original score put to fresh use. Bourmeister, who is a great-nephew of Tchaikovsky, agreed to mount *Snow Maiden* if this score could be found.

It is therefore the 1947 Bolshoi School score which forms the basis of Festival Ballet's version. Apart from the additional items added in London, however, the 1947 score itself used extra music besides the original *Snow Maiden* suite. It may be clearer if I list the elements of Festival Ballet's score in this way:

1. The 1947 Bolshoi School score, incorporating both Tchaikovsky's original *Snow Maiden* music and a number of extra items by him, now used as the basis of Festival Ballet's Acts II and III;
2. The first and second movements from Symphony No. 1 in G minor, Op. 13, subtitled "Winter Dreams", forming Festival Ballet's Act I;
3. The slow movement from the Piano Sonata in G, Op. 37, and *Invitation to the Trepak,* last of the *Eighteen Pieces* for Piano Solo, Op. 72, both orchestrated by Francis Chagrin and incorporated into Festival Ballet's Act III.

Tchaikovsky's *Snow Maiden* suite of 1873 has not yet appeared in the major Collected Edition of his works, so that it is uncertain how much there was of it, or whether in fact it was all used in the 1947 Bolshoi score. Moreover, at least one of those numbers is known to have survived from *Undine,* an early opera of 1869, most of which he "threw on the fire" after it was rejected by the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatres. Nor has it been possible to identify separately all the extra pieces added for the 1947 score, although I am grateful to Aubrey Bowman, the Festival Ballet conductor, for his help in tracing some of them. They include several pieces from the *Children's Album,* Op. 39, an independent *Valse-Scherzo* of 1889, and

one of the *Six Songs,* Op. 16 (all in Festival Ballet's Act II and orchestrated by whoever did the 1947 score), and the "Elegy" from the *Suite No. 3* in G, Op. 55, slightly different in orchestration from Tchaikovsky's own, used in Act III immediately before the final coda. The Festival Ballet version divides the acts one number earlier than in the 1947 score, the finale of the Bolshoi's Act I becoming the opening number of Festival Ballet's Act III.

Ben Toff, the company's administrator, with the assistance of the Moscow critic Nina Karasyova, traced the 1947 score in the Bolshoi archives on a visit to Moscow last January. The full score was in a bad condition, but photostats of the complete piano score were prepared within two hours for him to bring back, and a new "fair copy" of the full score in mss. was made ready by March. For the music needed for an extra act, a surviving relative of the composer's family suggested the two movements from the First Symphony. These, by the way, carry the composer's own subtitles of *Winter Reverie* and *Desolate Country* — apt enough for their present context, besides indicating a definite programmatic basis for the music.

I did not myself think them wholly successful as ballet music, and was surprised they were chosen in preference to the last two movements of the same symphony which, from a recording I have, seem to me much more balletic in style. Tchaikovsky was 26 and unaccustomed to handling symphonic form when he composed the First Symphony. The first two movements sound too deliberately contrived in their development, and the plodding seriousness of purpose reacts unfavourably on the choreographic image. Bourmeister's imagination looked to me more at ease with the rest of the score. The music is certainly not Tchaikovsky at his most inspired, but it is sufficiently attractive and expressive to serve the ballet's fairly simple needs. Of the two extra items added in London the slow movement from the Piano Sonata (transposed to F-sharp minor for reasons of key sequence) forms the *pas de trois* for the Snow Maiden, Kupava and Mizgir, and the *Invitation to the Trepak* is used for King Berendej's judgment and the succeeding *ensemble* of rejoicing. Geoffrey Corbett conducted an effective first-night performance by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

I WONDER if Yuri Piminov and Gennady Epishin, during those dark winter days back in Moscow, ever quite realised what they were taking on when they agreed to design a ballet to fit into the frenetic dimensions of Festival Hall's stage? It is a sticky problem for a designer certainly, yet I wonder whether in fact we are not turning it into a sort of bogey that needs to be exorcised with special incantations. After all, Alexandre Benois in his lovely designs for *The Nutcracker* treated "the Hall" as if it were a normal theatre and made no concessions other than those that were dictated by the fact that it is impossible to fly scenery. It resulted in designing of which everyone has reason to be proud.

Possibly one half of the reason for the failure of the scenery for *The Snow Maiden,* and it is the one element in the ballet that was a definite failure, may have been due to the fact that these two Soviet designers tried too hard to make something of the stage and laboriously to hide its idiosyncracies — its shelf-like dimensions, its rows of permanent steps and its immovable organ. It only ended up with the organ looking like a thinly disguised organ and the stairs, covered as they were by glitter-dusted sheets, looking just like steps and never like steppes. But let's get back to the beginning.

SNOW MAIDEN IN THE VILLAGE: The village girls surround Snow Maiden (Belinda Wright) and she first meets the mortal she loves. Mizgir (Briansky) and Kupava (Burr) in foreground. *Photo: Anthony Crickmay*

Drop-curtains are important as they set the mood and atmosphere before the ballet even gets going. How much *La Boutique Fantasque* and *Concurrence* gained from Derain's witty and subtle drop-curtains! How much *Le Tricorne* lost when Picasso's brilliant blue and white cloth was dispensed with! Through the years it would be possible to write a thesis on the uses and abuses of front-cloths in ballet. In the present case much of the beauty of Bourmeister's poetic and finely-wrought choreographic realisation of Ostrovsky's fairy story was almost torpedoed by the front curtain. With its crude drawing of the Snow Maiden herself and its unimaginative juxtaposition of sun and snow-laden pine tree on a Reckitts Blue ground, the wrong note was struck. It immediately smacked of the cruder reaches of Disneyland or those packeted Christmas cards from a low-grade Supermarket. Admittedly at later performances this crudity was somewhat toned-down by a snowfall projection, but nothing can really hide the fact that the wrong atmosphere had been engendered — one of cute whimsy. What a pity!

Then this curtain rolled back on a snowscape that bore certain similarities to Benois' Land of Snow for *The Nutcracker* — but the treatment was inferior and far too heavy-handed. The trees were so obviously cluttered in the centre to hide something (that organ) and the treatment of the distances was far too mundane where a certain lightness and even fantasy was called for. The projected flakes which fell continuously down the sky-blue curtain-wings seemed a poor substitute for the flakes which fell so realistically, and all over the stage in Benois' set — flakes which dusted around the dancers as they moved.

For the next scene — presumably "Another part of the Forest" — two snow slides were added to the existing set. Their only purpose appeared to be to bring in the *corps de ballet* sliding on their bottoms. It was very clumsy.

These two acts, concerned as they are with Father Frost and his snow fairies, should surely have been touched with more other-worldliness, and I kept on thinking how different it would have been in the hands of Goncharova, Tchelitchev or even the French Carzou or the British Kenneth Rowell. Here was opportunity to create something ravishingly pretty and fantastically strange, but I have yet to see a Soviet designer, not even the Kirov's admirable Simon Virsaladze, who was able to bring these particularly elusive qualities to the ballet stage.

With the third act we move to the land

VILLAGERS DANCE: Joan Potter and Vassilie Trunoff as the leading dancers of the village where the Snow Maiden arrives. Photo: Anthony Crickmay

which was at one time the especial province of Goncharova, for she it was who used, in her designing for ballets such as *Le Coq d'Or,* to bring barbaric excitement to fairy tale peasant capers. Piminov and Epishin have attempted a Russian rustic landscape, village in the distance, still snowbound but on the verge of Spring. This in fact, and owing to its nonentity, is the most successful, for it does not obtrude. Later it gives way to a river bank, a river swollen from melted snow, skeletal birches (which look like bamboos) and a feeling of dripping thaw everywhere. This idea which could have been charming was unhappily waterlogged by an over-emphasised realism,

JESTERS DANCE: Jesters perform at the village fête. Ronald Emblen, Hendrik Davel, Desmond Kelly, Gale Law and Alan Woodard. Photo: Anthony Crickmay

apparently inherent in most Soviet designing. In fact this salad of realism and constructivism has proved to be the ballet's undoing from a design point of view. It would have been far better to have used the constructivistic approach of someone like, say, Sean Kenny, or the honest-to-theatre approach of any one of the aforementioned painters. The present mixture just does not come off, and it is going to present a mighty problem when the ballet tours.

The lighting, which Benn Toff and his band of stage staff have gradually managed to adapt to the Hall's peculiarities, let everyone down on this occasion. It neither helped the scenery, which the Lord knows needed all the help it could get, nor did it do much of a job at lighting the dancers.

But the oddities of Festival Hall could not be blamed for what happened to the costumes. The strange thing about them was that in the actual designs, some of which we reproduced two months ago, they looked very apt — not imaginative perhaps but honest and right and the kind of costumes which only Russians could design for one of their own classics. But when seen together they created hardly any impression at all.

I believe that Bourmeister first saw the designs in England and after he had been working on the ballet for some time. I don't think that either Piminov or Epishin ever saw the choreography before their designs were finished. Herein lies the fault. I am certain that the only successful designing in ballet comes about by close collaboration between choreographer and designer. Ballet is not like an opera or a stage play. It needs a very special approach and a very special understanding of movement. I think you will find that most good designers for ballet first think of costumes as masses of colour whose juxtaposition will create certain effects at certain given moments in the ballet. After that the individual shapes of the costumes emerge and these are dictated by what the choreographer would have the dancers do. This requires a complete understanding of the dance, of anatomy and of the limitations in the entire range of bodily movement. It did not appear to me that Piminov and Epishin understood this, admirable as they doubtless are in other theatrical fields.

The tutus for the Snow Flakes were all right but rather commonplace. Father Frost was a character from a Russian opera, bewigged and bewhiskered and with a massive cloak of embroidered devices in blue and silver. The villagers were a most assorted bunch, some of whom were individually charming, covered with patterns that lost their effect in the vast reaches of Festival Hall. Some jesters looked like fugitives from *Esmeralda.* King Berendej appeared as twin brother to Father Frost, only in orange and gold. Nothing really fitted together anywhere.

The only thing that one can say about the designing is that it has not spoiled the success which the ballet enjoys with the public. But how much better it would have been if there could have been the close collaboration between this ballet's creators as has been shown in other Russian walks of life. It was an interesting experiment to show Soviet designers working for a British company, and even if it has not worked out as everyone hoped it would, let us hope that everyone has learned something from the experience. I think that for once it is the Soviet who could profit most from the lesson.

Peter Williams.

NIGHT SHADOW: A moment in the Rambert production of Balanchine's ballet where the Coquette (Lucette Aldous) first meets the Poet (Norman Morrice) at the Baron's ball. *Photo: Allegro Studios*

New for Rambert

Night Shadow

First given by Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, on July 18, 1961. Choreography by George Balanchine (reproduced by John Taras). Music by Vittorio Rieti (after themes of Vincenzo Bellini). Designed by Alix Stone.

Cast

The Coquette ..... LUCETTE ALDOUS
The Baron ..... JOHN CHESWORTH
The Poet ..... NORMAN MORRICE
The Sleep-Walker ... JUNE SANDBROOK

The Divertissements

Pastorale ..... SHIRLEY DIXON, PETER CURTIS
Blackamoors ..... JENNIFER KELLY, ALAN CUNLIFFE
Harlequin ... KENNETH BANNERMAN
Acrobats with Hoops ... VIVIAN DODDS, JOANNA BANKS, JANE SANDERS

Corps de Ballet of Guests

STORY

"A MASKED ball is held in the Baron's castle. A Poet is introduced to the Baron's beautiful Mistress and becomes fascinated by her. An entertainment is given by some of the guests and later the Poet and the Coquette are discovered alone. The Baron is angry and takes the Coquette off with the other guests. The Poet, left alone in the courtyard, sees a mysterious figure in white who comes down from the Castle tower. At first amused to find a Sleepwalker, he later falls under her spell and follows her back to the tower. The Coquette sees them and calls the Baron who in his rage kills the Poet. The Sleepwalker returns and takes the body back up the tower. She is the wife of the Baron."

CHOREOGRAPHY

IT is scandalous that a whole generation of ballet-goers and dancers has arisen in England that is almost totally unacquainted with the work of George Balanchine. This sort of situation, which can only arise in ballet, would find its impossible equivalent in, say, music, if all bar one or two of the works of Igor Stravinsky were prohibited to young music students.

Although Balanchine's ballets are seen frequently throughout America and Europe, Britain seems to be almost completely neglected, although the Royal Ballet does occasionally dance *Ballet Imperial,* and last year Festival Ballet took *Bourrée Fantasque* into its repertory. This year Ballet Rambert added materially to British ballet's meagre stock of Balanchine works, by producing the master's *Night Shadow.* It would be difficult to think of a Balanchine ballet better suited to their needs and qualities.

In sober fact, *Night Shadow* stands somewhat apart from the Balanchine canon. It is a Romantic narrative ballet, a *genre* Balanchine has only rarely experimented with, and it can in no sense be taken as typical. The story was provided by the composer, Vittorio Rieti, and it sounds much like a parody of all the stock situations beloved by 19th-century choreographers and even more, opera composers.

The basic narrative of a Poet at a masked ball and his encounter with the sleepwalking wife of his Host is as outlandish as anything one is likely to come across in the wilder extravagances of Romantic art. Moreover, Balanchine has made only the most trifling effort to enable the story to hang together, and he appears actually to revel in its rather grand species of inconsequential illogicality. At times it seems more like a casual sketch for a ballet than the ballet itself, something Balanchine just knocked up at a few spare rehearsals some fifteen years ago, and while it shows moments of white-hot inspiration, equally it reveals little evidence of careful thought. Why then is it a minor masterpiece ?

There are some ballets (not many) that have an atmosphere so strong and pungent that you can practically smell them on entering the theatre. *La Fête Etrange* is one, and *Night Shadow* is another. This peculiarly potent mixture of plot and music — and much of the ballet's effectiveness must derive from the sweetly wispy nostalgia of the Bellini/Rieti score — comes together with choreography of unusual theatricality. The *ensemble* dances have a vapid charm, setting the scene and also, particularly in retrospect, giving the ballet an air of mystery, which is intensified by the strangely sinister *divertissement.* "In retrospect" — perhaps that is the key phrase for this ballet, for so much of its atmosphere arises from the ballet's delayed action effect.

You watch as if in a haze the almost pointless comings and goings of the guests, with their mincing, prancing little steps and coldly jovial manner, and see darkly the curious *divertissement,* that is so nearly conventional yet with its undertone of oddity. The ballet is difficult to size up. From the jerkily stereotyped beginning it unfurls into the moving encounter between the Poet and the Sleepwalker, and then suddenly flares into violence and death, before subsiding into its quietly elegiac end. As soon as the Sleepwalker makes her entrance — a character grotesquely close to parody or farce — the ballet changes its direction. The previous vapidity now takes on a new dimension of carefully observed decadence, and the elusive

NIGHT SHADOW: *The Coquette (Lucette Aldous) dances with two partners at the ball. Above, with the Baron (John Chesworth) and, below, with the Poet (Norman Morrice.* *Photos: John Blomfield*

atmosphere of the whole ballet falls into place.

The cardboard-Gothic characters seem at first to have slipped straight out of a Massine potboiler. That mysterious Poet, drooping with Romantic aestheticism, that gay, jealous Coquette and the poker-faced Husband, these could step neatly into *Gaîté Parisienne* without raising so much as a surprised murmur, or causing Offenbach's music to miss a beat. Yet the character of the Sleepwalker, who somehow eventually sets the tone for the whole work, is a unique creation, realised in daringly original choreography.

It is a measure of Balanchine's genius that he was able to envisage the curiously semi-conscious state of sleepwalking in the absolutely apposite terms of the classical *pas de bourrée,* and has largely based the Sleepwalker's rôle on this simple classroom step. The *pas de deux* between the Sleepwalker and the Poet is a model of ingenuity, with the passive Sleepwalker being more manipulated than partnered by the ardent Poet. Lost in her trance, a creature of half-reality, the Poet gently swirls her around, propelling her this way and that, until, with an ever-growing mixture of wonderment and passion, he tentatively kisses her, and she glides away still locked in her dreams, while he follows as if himself under a spell. Precariously poised on a razor-edge, this *pas de deux* never topples over into the ludicrous, and it remains a unique and wonderful dance, unlike anything else in ballet.

After this daringly bizzare *pas de deux* the ballet could easily have trailed off into anti-climax, but Balanchine saves the situation with a thrillingly dramatic stroke. The Coquette sees the lovers disappear, and when the guests have returned, she jealously warns the Husband, who follows the Poet for revenge. The guests continue dancing, unknowing and unconcerned, until suddenly the music is broken by three stabbing knife-strokes in the score. The guests cower back, and the *divertissement* dancers run in, horrified. The Poet appears, clutching his stomach, dying. He crumbles on to the ground, the Sleepwalker enters and the guests — have they seen this happen before? — lift the dead Poet up, and carry his body ritualistically round the stage. Then they hand him to the Sleepwalker, who enfolds him like a sleeping child, rises on her points and glides off backwards, still bearing her strange burden. Now the guests stare fascinated at the high tower, and the light from the Sleepwalker's candle goes up, window by window, as she carries the body to her bed-chamber at the top. Still watching the ascending light, the guests are swaying in a stylised agony of grief as the ballet ends.

Night Shadow was first seen in England when Balanchine produced it for the De Cuevas Ballet at Covent Garden in 1948, and it has since won great popularity not only in England but throughout Europe. It has been frequently produced for other companies (see "Ballet Perspectives: No. 20" — *Dance and Dancers,* December 1960) by John Taras, once ballet-master to the De Cuevas company, and currently ballet-master to New York City Ballet. The Rambert revival is a faithful one, and in the *divertissement* it includes the pawky Harlequin's solo, never seen in England before. For the record, the *Pastorale* is danced by one couple, and the *pas de trois* of acrobats has been allotted to three girls.

DANCING

WHAT went wrong? Here is a work that should have fitted the Ballet Rambert like a glove, and yet somehow its initial performances turned out to be a disappointment. Partly, as many people have already noted, it may have been because *Night Shadow* is a large-scale ballet which we are used to seeing produced up to opera house dimensions. It was certainly disquieting to see the amount of doubling that had to be done by the company, and even more disquieting (although with a little thought we should have realised it was inevitable) to find girls in the *corps* dancing in travesty. It is also perhaps true that the dance patterns of the guests, as intricate as lace, looked somewhat cramped on the Sadler's Wells stage. However, ballets usually expand and contract to a most remarkable extent, and I cannot think that much of the blame for the work's comparative lack of effectiveness need be accounted to the smallness of the production. This was merely an obstacle that had to be, could have been, and doubtless in time will be, overcome.

Again at the first performance the ballet, although adequately mounted, did not look especially well-rehearsed, and some of the finesse and the precise accents of the dances were lacking, although, as might be

expected, this improved as the season progressed.

Personally I feel the main reason for the ballet's initial failure to gell, was the simple yet basic one of ill-advised casting. It is always easy to be wise after the event, but it did seem as if the work had been cast almost more by lots than reason.

June Sandbrook is a lovely dancer, with a truly remarkable command of Romantic style, as her first London appearances as La Sylphide and Giselle abundantly showed later in the season. She had just the right manner for the Sleepwalker, and the impassive poignancy and child-like innocence of her acting could not easily be bettered. Unhappily her dancing was not good enough for the rôle. Technically the part demands the lightest and most feathery of *pas de bourrées,* with the steps skimming, almost floating, over the stage, and this she is not, as yet, able to provide. When this technical requirement is met, she will become a very worthy Sleepwalker indeed.

A far more serious, and perhaps crucial, deficiency was in Norman Morrice's playing of the Poet. Gauche where he should have been Byronic, uneasy where he should have been assured, and enthusiastic where he should have been ardent, he also seemed to lack the essential qualities of stage presence and bearing. Curiously he appeared to get worse as the season went on, and while this could have been the result of the first night notices decreasing his confidence, this is no way to answer back criticism. Not that any blame really attaches to Morrice himself. Although he is obviously destined to make his mark in ballet as a major choreographer rather than a minor dancer, in the right part he can still give a good account of himself. This was just not the right part.

Things were far happier with both Lucette Aldous's Coquette and John Chesworth's Baron. Aldous danced sensitively, particularly in Balanchine's ravishingly beautiful *pas de deux* for the Coquette and the Poet. She conveyed the rôle's shallowness, petty spite and shocked remorse with some delicacy, and although she could with advantage have been more forceful on occasions, it was all in all a well-judged portrayal. Chesworth, sinister and dominating, was highly effective, and I cannot help thinking that he could with some advantage have exchanged rôles with Morrice. While I am not suggesting that Chesworth need prove a Poet of the Skibine calibre, it seems fairly certain that he is the most suitable dancer for the rôle in the present Rambert company.

By and large, and this seemed a further weakness, the *divertissements* were not yet well enough danced. A bouyant young newcomer, Peter Curtis, made a very good impression in the Pastorale, while Jennifer Kelly and Alan Cunliffe or John O'Brien were quite adequate as the Blackamoors. However, if the Harlequin solo is to be given at all, it needs to be far better danced than it was by Kenneth Bannerman. Fiendishly difficult, it requires a technician such as Flemming Flindt for it to make its full point, even though Bannerman did bring home something of the humour. The Acrobat *pas de trois* is, I think, best danced by three boys, but in any event one central boy would be an advantage to the present version, even though its current leader, Vivian Dodds, revealed a charming personality and promise.

The only major cast change of the season was the introduction of Gillian Martlew as the Sleepwalker. If anything her footwork was neater than Sandbrook's, but her characterisation was overly taut, nearly neurotic, and she seemed altogether too conscious of the tragedy engulfing her.

Clive Barnes.

NIGHT SHADOW: *The death of the Poet (Norman Morrice) with the Sleep-Walker (June Sandbrook) hovering over him in John Blomfield's picture above. Below, the Sleep-Walker carries the body of the Poet up to her tower in Allegro Studios picture below.*

MUSIC

THEMES from three Bellini operas furnish the score of *Night Shadow.* They were selected from *La Sonnambula, I Puritani* and *Norma,* and re-worked into their new guise by Vittorio Rieti, a former associate of Balanchine, who also suggested the subject of the ballet. Rieti, an Italian born in Egypt in 1898, is a prolific composer in his own right, and for some time was head of the composition department at the Chicago Music College. His works range from operas to piano pieces and songs, but he has been chiefly successful with music for the theatre, notably in Paris before the last war, and original ballet scores such as those for Balanchine's early *Barabeau* and *Le Bal* (with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes) and later *Waltz Academy* (Ballet Theatre).

Although Rieti is credited with the arrangement of the *Night Shadow* music, there is little difference from Bellini's own scoring except insofar as the operatic vocal line is of course replaced by instruments. With Ballet Rambert's reduced orchestra it is apt to sound rather thin at times, especially in the quality of string tone, but it successfully evokes the romantic setting and spirit Balanchine conceived for the ballet. We are conscious of little incongruity, for instance, when the Sleep-walker and the Poet dance their imaginative *pas de deux* to the music of the Mad Scene *(Qui la voce)* from *I Puritani.* As an example of a score which is subordinate but suggestive, it serves its purpose, though it needs rather more precision of ensemble and shapeliness of phrasing in those long melodic lines than I heard at the first Sadler's Wells performance.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

SOME years ago, Andrée Howard and myself collaborated on a "very Romantic ballet". This work, *Selina,* was a gentle and affectionate send-up of all the

oddities — storywise, dancewise and designwise — of Romantic ballet. Balanchine's *Night Shadow* could almost fulfil the same function as it teeters so perilously on the borderline of burlesque. Of course you never quite know with Balanchine but I don't think it was intended as such. As I see it, the story, no more extraordinary than many operas of the Bellini period, is the thin thread which binds together a series of dances of an unlikely but charming nature. It could be a wholly poetic conception, it could be a study in decadence, but it all depends on the way it is interpreted and largely, I think, on the way it is designed. Or should I say, "could be" designed, for I have never been entirely at ease with the designs I have seen so far. I never saw Dorothea Tanning's work for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in use, though I have seen reproductions of her designs and they looked rather mannered. Then Jean Robier designed the ballet for the Marquis de Cuevas and it left little impression; this was later replaced by designs by Delfau. Although a great improvement there were certain shortcomings in that the black and white setting was rather too stylised and the costumes almost too overloaded.

I had great hopes that Alix Stone, whose designs I admire greatly, would do the trick in the Rambert production but this hasn't quite worked out either. She may possibly have been influenced by the ballet's previous designs, a danger which is almost inescapable when a well-known work has to be re-designed. Anyway, the total result sits down rather heavily between the two previous lots of designing seen in England.

Her basic shape for the setting was identical to the de Cuevas productions — a Romantic distance with a tower on the prompt side. It was probably in the treatment of this tower that the setting was thrown out of balance — altogether too puny and the tiny windows looked rather like those that are associated with "the smallest room in the house". Admittedly the stages on which Ballet Rambert plays are usually not the largest and this cuts out an immense tower for the ascent and descent of the Sleepwalker with her candle. However, I feel something more satisfactory could have been arrived at — a more diagonal ascent right across the prompt side perhaps.

Then the O.P. side was masked in with a black curtain and that completely destroyed any feeling of perspective which was a pity as Stone's backcloth was sensitively designed with its Romantic Poussin-like distances. On the first night, the unimaginitive lighting contributed greatly to a total monotony and lack of atmosphere; later this was improved.

It was, I think, the general "deadness" of this setting which killed the costumes. A great pity as some of them were beautifully designed and were, in fact the best costumes that this ballet has yet had in its European productions. They were in subtle colours with no violently discordant note and collectively their muted browns, greys, oranges, blues and reds and so on, gave a patina to the whole stage picture. What is more they married happily to the three principals — Poet in grey, Sleepwalker in white and Baron in black — who appear to have varied little in shape and colour in all the productions we have seen.

The only principal who changes with the various productions is the Coquette and what Stone designed for her was excellent — black velvet with frothy white bubbling around in various places and all the air of a well-protected *demi mondaine* — it would have been eminently suitable for Violetta in *La Traviata* or Marguerite Gautier in *La Dame aux Camélias* who are one and the same person.

What I feel this ballet needs in its designing is a far greater feeling of "strangeness", something poised delicately on the frontier between realism and fantasy, something of what Lila di Nobili brought to Ashton's *Ondine*.

Peter Williams.

A PLACE IN THE DESERT: *Gillian Martlew, as the Daughter of a Village Elder expresses her agony, at the complexity of her situation, in dance.*

Photo: John Blomfield

A Place in the Desert

First given by Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, on July 25, 1961. Choreography by Norman Morrice. Music by Carlos Surinach. Designs by Ralph Koltai.

Cast

The Village Elder ... JOHN CHESWORTH
His Heir ... KENNETH BANNERMAN
His Daughter ..... GILLIAN MARTLEW
The Younger Son ... ALAN CUNLIFFE
An Old Nurse ..... SANDRA SHORT
A Company Agent
NORMAN MORRICE
Corps de Ballet of members of other village families.

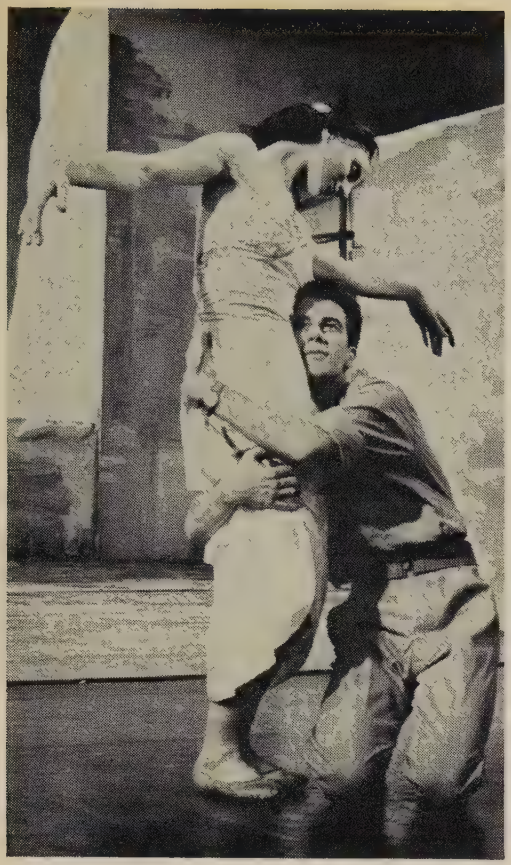
STORY

"THE action of the ballet takes place in a lonely part of the Middle East where a foreign company has just completed the construction of a small dam. The waters trapped by the dam threaten the existence of an ancient village whose inhabitants, in spite of repeated orders, still refuse to leave. Today the final ultimatum is to be presented."

PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

BALLET heroes so rarely wear trousers that whenever they do keep their pants on we are apt to greet them with an excess of consideration. Audiences, or more particularly critics, guiltily over-familiar with tights and trappings, long for contemporary themes with all the wistful yearning a suburban housewife might feel for a bit of contemporary furniture, and in both instances the desire is fundamentally healthy. The danger for ballet is that a present-day setting and modern dress is no guarantee of contemporary relevance, which may possibly be more marked in a superficially old-fashioned love story than in a work finding its up-to-the-headlines theme in the effect of a new dam on an Arab village.

This is Morrice's fourth ballet, and like its three predecessors it reveals an original mind. Morrice's interest in the contemporary scene, the very serious nature of his talents, and the splendid arrogance with which he presumes that all of life is subject to ballet's comment, have carved out a unique place for him among British choreographers. I can sympathise with people who think that what he's trying to do by way of extending ballet's range is of such overwhelming importance that his present failure or success is a relatively minor matter. I can sympathise, but I cannot agree, and in this latest ballet, *A*



A PLACE IN THE DESERT : *The Daughter of the Village Elder finds herself involved in the love of a stranger and the hate of her brother. Left, Gillian Martlew with the Company Agent (Norman Morrice) in an Allegro Studios picture. Right, Martlew with her Brother (Kenneth Bannerman) are watched by their Father (John Chesworth) in a John Blomfield picture.*

Place in the Desert, Morrice seems to be presenting his intentions as a surety for his achievements, asking us, as it were, to accept the word for the deed.

Twice previously — first in *Two Brothers* and then with even more conspicuous success in *Hazaña* — Morrice has utilised themes right off the usual dead-beat track of ballet scenarios. After last year's by-play in *The Wise Monkeys* with ballet allegory, he has now returned to his earlier vein of *verismo* drama for this present *danse arabe.* He has saddled himself with a story of the most daunting complexity, beside which even *Hazaña* seems conventional and simple.

His background is found in the clash between East and West. A Western company is building a dam, which on its completion will require the flooding of an Arab village. The villagers refuse to be forcibly evacuated, and it is around this conflict that Morrice revolves his ballet. This however, is merely the backdrop or ground-bass to the drama, which is more immediately concerned with the love affair between the daughter of the Village Elder and the Agent of the engineering company who is responsible for the village's evacuation. These two themes are neatly interwoven and finally resolved. Morrice covers a lot of ground in the brief twenty minute's passage of his ballet. Events concertina up in a manner that while a trifle too fortuitous is never allowed to become absurd.

The Sheikh's daughter is pregnant by the Agent. After the Agent has presented, somewhat inconclusively, the final notice to quit to the Sheikh, the Sheikh's younger son acts as go-between for a rendezvous between the two lovers, which is discovered. The Agent is beaten up by the irate villagers, incited by the Sheikh's vicious firebrand of an elder son. He is saved by the intervention of the girl, who tells her father of her pregnancy. The elder brother challenges his father's authority, and the Sheikh thrusts him aside. He falls over on to his own knife, and dies. At this moment floodlights on the dam announce that it is in operation, and the villagers flee before the advancing waters. At last the two lovers persuade the Sheikh to leave his home, and as he does so he gently places his cloak over the dead body of his son and heir, who lies there on the patch of parched earth that should have been his inheritance, to await the rising waters.

The story, for all its complexities, is told well enough to compel interest at a first viewing, and indeed one experiences the emotion, unusual in the lyric theatre, of wondering what is going to happen next. Even so there are some surprising loose ends poking out unknotted from this intricately interlaced skein of narrative. For example, the Agent approaches the village as if he had never been there before, and his attitude to the inhabitants seems to strongly support this, even though the fact that he has got the Sheikh's daughter in the family way would appear to make this unlikely. Then the actual working of the dam, and even more the working of the controlling company, seems most peculiar. I know little enough about dam construction, yet nevertheless I cannot envisage the situation arising that Morrice here depicts. Even less can I envisage a dam that only switches on its floodlights when it first opens its sluices to go into operation, for presumably construction work on the dam would have proceeded by floodlight every night. Granting all this, I still cannot imagine that any construction company would risk the inundation of an occupied village, and would not — final ultimatum or not — have held off their operations until they were completely satisfied that the village had been properly evacuated.

Then again, while the story is unusual for ballet, is it not also somewhat contrived? How seriously, I wonder, would we take this story were it the basis of a novel or film. I suspect it would seem very shallow and trite, hedged in with coincidences, and pushed along by improbabilities There again, how much does the story reveal to us of the characters concerned, or the situation depicted, or more significantly the background of Arab/European tension which possibly it is intended to evoke. Here is a ballet that appears to be inviting comment on literary terms, yet on those terms he seems to have nothing very significant to say.

But, in ballet, choreography is the thing — and after one has weaved one's way through the adroitly sign-posted thickets of Morrice's plot, what do we find? Morrice has a genius for simplicity, and for the most part *A Place in the Desert* is beautifully produced. Unfortunately its dance interest is comparatively slight. Morrice has composed in an almost exclusively *recitative* style, and his view of oriental dancing is no more profound or illuminating than one would expect from a tastefully staged revue number. Time and time again, Morrice shirks the creation of dance images and contents himself with formal naturalistic gesture. Whereas in the past his work appears to have been modelled upon Antony Tudor, here he

shows a far greater affinity with the strutting mime-plays of Robert Helpmann, although it must be allowed that Morrice is never pretentious.

In one or two places Morrice does seriously tackle the problem of putting his story down in expressive dance. The *pas de deux* where the girl tells the young engineer she is pregnant, has its moments of choreographic truth, although even here the Eastern hand movement (reminiscent of an Indian mudra or something ruder) is an over-employed embellishment. (Someone told me that this gesture meant "I am pregnant" in Persian dancing — and I never found out whether he was joking, nor did I much care.) The circular, finger-snapping prowl of the villagers when they are threatening the lovers, was a shrewd piece of theatre and equally telling choreographically, but there is little enough of the brilliant dance drama found in *Hazaña,* or to a slightly lesser extent *Two Brothers.*

Strangely enough while *A Place in the Desert* does not advance Morrice's talents — for it is the mixture as before disastrously diluted with an over-dose of acting — it does in a sense advance his career. Even his best ballet, *Hazaña,* was something of a work of promise, and *could* just possibly have been the lucky strike of a gifted amateur. *A Place in the Desert* is not, I think, a good ballet, but in a curious sense it is obviously the failure of a very important choreographer. It is rather more assured and professional than anything he has done before, and shows the clear-cut confidence of a man who knows where he is going and knows how to get there. Personally I think he needs to change his direction somewhat, and personally I think he will.

Soon he takes leave of absence from Rambert to have a prolonged look at the American dance scene. I hope he has the chance to get a good long sight of the work of Balanchine and Graham. I also hope that before he starts his next ballet he will take a very deep breath, and ask himself whether what he is trying to do can be best done in the ballet theatre, or whether he is merely turning out a sort of film *manqué.* To fulfil his abilities he needs, in my opinion, to remember two things. The first is that he is a choreographer, and that consequently his business is with dancing. The second is that there are some things that ballet can do better than any other art form, and that his job is to find them. He could learn a lot from Balanchine, and more particularly in his case, Graham.

DANCING

IN all his ballets, Morrice has managed to obtain a persuasive and sympathetic performance from his cast, and *A Place in the Desert* is no exception. The central characters are once again played by Gillian Martlew, John Chesworth and Morrice himself, dancers who by now have an instinctive understanding of his intentions.

Martlew had a possibly less rewarding rôle than in either *Two Brothers* or *Hazaña.* This Lakmé-like creature is of necessity somewhat negative, but Martlew brought a warm womanliness to the character, as well as dancing with a sinuous, oriental-style grace. Chesworth has a most natural stage authority, a quality comparatively rare in British dancers. He played the rôle of the Sheikh with compassion and understanding, and even managed to bring conviction to the sentimental, pay-off conventionality of his final farewell to the dead body of his son.

Morrice's European Agent proved far less effective, and this was probably as much the fault of Morrice the choreographer as Morrice the dancer. The rôle is conceived as being quite impossibly diffident, and I find it hard to believe that such a timid person would have passed the construction company's selection board as someone fit to bear the white man's burden under the Arab sun. There was an earnestness here, which was neatly expressed, yet he seemed no fair match for the villagers, and this detracted from the conflict. I think perhaps the point has come, when Morrice should seriously consider whether he would be better advised not to appear in his own ballets. This present part, for example, I imagine would have been better given to Kenneth Bannerman.

Bannerman himself made a good thing out of the rebellious elder son, concerned equally for his family's honour and his own inheritance. Another very attractive portrayal came from Alan Cunliffe as the sympathetic younger brother, and the rest of the company behaved with suitable indecorum as the villagers.

Clive Barnes.

A PLACE IN THE DESERT: *The Daughter (Gillian Martlew) dances with her fellow villagers before her love affair with the Agent is discovered. Photo: John Blomfield*

MUSIC

IMPRESSED as I was by Morrice's use of Surinach music for *Hazana* two years ago, I could not but feel that his choice this time was in part responsible for the failure of his new ballet to make a comparable impression. From what I have been able to discover, the score was originally written quite recently as incidental music to a television play, *David and Bathsheba,* produced within the last year on the American CBS network. (Those who know their Bible will spot a certain connection between the emotional subject-matter of both play and ballet.) Morrice is said to have taken over the score as it stood, without alteration, and I believe Surinach, who is 46 and Spanish by birth (not Mexican, as I mistakenly wrote elsewhere), attended some of the ballet's rehearsals. He has made his home in America since 1951.

Almost the most interesting feature of the score is its orchestration, for two each of flutes, oboes, trumpets, horns and double-basses (no other strings), plus timpani, percussion, harp and piano. This was the list as given to me; I would add that either an oboist was making some curious noises when I attended or else there was a *cor anglais* lurking around somewhere too. The kind of tone-colour represented by instrumentation of this sort is immediately evocative of what to Western ears sounds vaguely "Arabic", and therefore successfully conjures up an appropriate sense of pictorial atmosphere.

But there the merits of the score cease. The harmonies are not in the least exotic, and stem more from the tradition of Rimsky-Korsakov and Ravel. More significantly, the melodic invention is thin and repetitious, a mosaic of half a dozen or so principal themes played separately or occasionally paired, and merely repeated in different keys or instrumental colours rather than developed in any musical sense. Doubtless it was sufficient as a subsidiary accompaniment to a play, where its purpose would not have been more than the suggestion or reminder of mood and setting. In a ballet, however, music carries a much heavier responsibility than that, especially to motivate so complex a series of incident and emotion as there is in *A Place in the Desert.* The music is quite simply unequal to the purpose, let alone to compensate for any choreographic weaknesses, and it is Morrice's failure to recognise this which puts, to my mind, an insuperable obstacle in the way of the ballet's success.

Noël Goodwin.

A PLACE IN THE DESERT: *The Daughter (Gillian Martlew) is roughly treated by her family and the villagers when it is discovered that she has associated with the hated Company Agent.* *Photo: John Blomfield*

DECOR

ASHTON had Fedorovitch, MacMillan had Georgiadis, Cranko had Piper, Petit had Clavé and usually ballet's success depends on a close collaboration between two of its creators in the early stages of a choreographer's career. For his first ballet, *Two Brothers,* Norman Morrice found Ralph Koltai and in him it would seem that two people have found the spark which ignites the particular form of genius in each.

Morrice in his choreography has discovered a form of realistic story-telling which as yet has to be fully developed though his themes are decidedly original ones as far as ballet is concerned. Koltai is a realistic designer whose settings would be equally at home in the straight theatre. Yet all that he does is touched with poetic observation and with an obvious love and understanding of texture.

When we reproduced, two months ago, a photograph of Koltai's model for his *A Place in the Desert* set, I thought it looked so like what he did for *Two Brothers* as to be almost indistinguishable. In actual fact they are very different and I think that his recent work shows an enormous step forward. Where in *Two Brothers* his walls amounted to the general idea of what walls look like, in the new ballet the walls of the desert hovels were so beautifully painted that they could have been hung up as canvasses in an exhibition.

A wall is a wall, is a wall, you may say. But it isn't you know. Just take a walk and look at some walls, then stand and look at them some more. In time you might see that walls provide the most exciting free exhibitions of art that you are ever likely to see. Sometimes they are weathered by nature, sometimes they are laced by graphiti, sometimes a plain washed wall can throw back magical reflections — there is no end to the variety of emotions that walls can evoke, but then of course you never have time to stop and look, do you? Anyway, Koltai seems to have and profited greatly.

I don't know how well he knows the Middle East but he has certainly managed to create almost the smell of those little collections of humanity who eke out an existence in the small scattered communities that you see as you whisk through the desert in your large American automobile. Those tiny dwellings that appear to be held together by mud, plaster and no little amount of faith.

The small square is the meeting place of the village and across the sand-blown desert can vaguely be seen the menacing dam which is under construction. This dam, seen only indistinctly is so placed behind a gauze in the centre of the back-cloth that it broods over the scene like a Sword of Damocles. The whole plan and the whole treatment is so right that it comes as something of a shock that the action of the ballet cannot carry the whole thing through to a successful conclusion. From a design point of view everything is there to help it on its way.

The costumes also are of a quality that matches up to the excellence of the setting and again Koltai's use of texture is brought into play because a colour is not quite what you think it is on first viewing. The black of some of the female villagers are later seen to be striped by many unusual combinations of colour. The shirt for the heir of the Village Elder is not the non-descript shirt and bag-trouser that it appears to be at first — it's faded pink and turquoise. It is only in the white dress for the Daughter, that it looks as though Koltai has ventured rather farther east — too clean and spotless and rather at variance with its surroundings though it is probably quite authentic. Somehow the shapes of all the costumes had a ring of reality about them and I was never conscious, as I invariably am in Oriental spectacles created in the Occident, of dressing-up.

It would be good if one day Morrice could re-work his ballet to settle more happily into this splendid designing for it is not worthy of being submerged by the desert sands — or, in this case, the desert waters.

Peter Williams.

NEXT MONTH

Owing to lack of space in this issue, the following will appear in the October number of Dance and Dancers **(on sale September 25):**

BALLETS: U.S.A.: Reviews and many new pictures of all the ballets given during the London season of Jerome Robbins' company at the Saville Theatre.

NIGHT AND SILENCE: Reviews and new pictures of Walter Gore's ballet revived for himself and Paula Hinton for the Ballet Rambert season at Sadler's Wells and for his own, recently formed, company — London Ballet.

SWAN LAKE: Reviews and pictures of the Bourmeister version of *Swan Lake* Act 2 for London's Festival Ballet.

BALLET RAMBERT AND LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET: Reviews and pictures of the London seasons of both companies.

NEWS AT HOME: Reviews of the Masque Ballet Club's performance and of the new works at the Hintlesham Festival.

FROM ABROAD: Ballet Festival in Sweden by Gene Palatsky and news and reviews from France and America by Marie-Françoise Christout and Arthur Todd.

All the usual and many new and topical features.

The Kirov in London

The Kirov production of Swan Lake, the Gala Programme and a Postscript to the company's first season in London.

Swan Lake

First given at Covent Garden on July 30, 1961.

CHOREOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTION

Although I admired Konstantin Sergeyev's production of *The Sleeping Beauty* immensely for its stylishness, eloquence and elegance, it was not perhaps quite such a creative achievement as his production of *Swan Lake,* which must surely rank as among the finest of the 19th-century classic revivals we have ever been privileged to see in Western Europe.

The great quality of this production, or rather the unique quality, was its unity. The problem confronting all producers of *Swan Lake* can be put down in simple terms of black and white, or, if you prefer it, Petipa and Ivanov. The Prologue and second act (first and third acts in the Royal Ballet version) are usually attributed to Petipa and are choreographed in a fairly conventional, brilliantly classical manner. The white acts, choreographed by Ivanov, are romantic in feeling and much more "advanced" in style, indeed it is from this choreography that so much of 20th-century choreography eventually stemmed. In Britain we make no effort to relate these two sections of the ballet, and by now have become so accustomed to the duality of the production that we scarcely notice the gaping discrepancy in the ballet's treatment. But I fear we will from now on.

Wonderfully helped by the here altogether admirable designs of Virsaladze, Sergeyev has succeeded remarkably in linking the grandeur that was Petipa with the glory that was Ivanov. This has been accomplished chiefly by toning down the brilliance of the prologue and "black" act, until the two are suffused with the same lingering glow of romanticism characteristic of the scenes with Odette. The Prologue *pas de trois,* for example, that glittering gem of high Petipa, was here produced in a dreamily romantic way, perfectly attuned to Sergeyev's total conception of the ballet. Another, more simple, unifying device was running the Prologue into the First Act without an interval. This practice, which used to be followed by the Royal Ballet before their 1952 revisions, definitely works to the ballet's advantage; indeed, I would like to see it extended so that the interval was omitted between the Second and last Acts — and damn the fall-off in bar takings!

Looking at the ballet in greater detail, it has quite a lot in common with the current Royal Ballet version. Even so it is nearer the Bolshoi than it is to us, for like the Moscow company it appears to take its basis from the last Gorsky revisions (those made in 1920 and 1922) rather than the 1895 Petipa/Ivanov original that the Royal Ballet still faithfully employs. Both of these Gorsky versions were made in Moscow, and in Leningrad it seems as though the old Ivanov/Petipa choreography held the stage until 1933. However by 1933 the details of the old version were becoming blurred, for the notorious neo-realist production by Vaganova (the one where Rothbart was made into a penniless Duke, and the emphasis was shifted from mysticism to the mistier realms of psychology) took as one of its aims the restoration of much of the actual Ivanov choreography that had by then been lost. This "experimental" *Swan Lake* did not last long, soon being modified and later completely revised by Fedor Lopukhov, who had appeared as a child in the original at the turn of the century and later in the course of his career danced many of the solo rôles.

The present version by Konstantin Sergeyev dates mainly from 1950, and it was then that he introduced Gorsky's Jester into the Leningrad production. Interestingly enough on July 24, 1958, at Leningrad's other theatre, the Maly Opera House, that company produced K. Boyarsky's restoration of the original 1895 production supervised by Lopukhov, in which the veteran ballet-master tried to re-create as closely as possible the Ivanov/Petipa choreography, and even the original designs, making only the barest concessions to contemporary taste, such as reducing the rôle of Benno, cutting down the mime and leaving out some of the more dated appurtenances, including the beards of the huntsmen! This production was very favourably received in Russia, but the Sergeyev version would make no claims to such authenticity. It was therefore most unfortunate that a number of authoritative writers in London stated that the present Kirov version had more of the original choreography than is found in the Royal Ballet version. This, with all respect, is nonsense.

ODETTE: Inna Zubkovskaya as Odette in the second and fourth acts of the Sergeyev version of the Petipa/Ivanov Swan Lake. *Photo: Roy Round*

Sergeyev's new production of the "Prologue" is a marvellous piece of work, sensitive, graceful and alive. All the mime rôles are presented with intelligence and tact, and the young Prince and his friends (for these are all friends, not peasants) are admirably portrayed. The choreography is almost entirely original to Sergeyev, and the production has been given a fascinating flow and coherence. The dances of the Jester, and indeed the whole conception of the Jester, are blended into the choreography, while the Petipa *pas de trois* (amended slightly, especially the male rôle) is integrated with the courtiers in the most charming way imaginable. Not only do the *pas de trois* dancers take part in the general action (in the Royal Ballet's version they look like emissaries from a visiting ballet troupe!) but the Jester and various courtiers are allowed to stray into their solo variations to enchanting effect. The omission of the traditional mime — which works much better here than in *The Sleeping Beauty* — has led to the story being slightly modified, and, dare we say, clarified. The Princess-Mother no longer descends upon the party to drop her bombshell that Siegfried will have immediately to choose a bride, this arrangement presumably having been come to before the action of the ballet starts. In the Kirov version she arrives merely to give her son his birthday present of a new crossbow. This is far more convincing (after all, no mother suddenly breaks up a birthday party to announce in front of all and sundry, that her son must "that night choose a bride" from a few she has up her sleeve) and the introduction of the crossbow provides another link with the following act. Thus Siegfried is not melancholy, but quite naturally cheerful at the

thought of his forthcoming betrothal, and his melancholy only emerges *after* he has lost his heart to Odette.

Personally I was not altogether happy about some of Sergeyev's *ensemble* choreography, there was a tendency for it to be both too prancing and too diffuse, and during the final dance night fell with almost alarming speed. While this facilitated a most attractive lantern dance, it could have been far better accomplished with a gathering dusk.

In conformity with normal Soviet practice, but in marked and welcome variance with all Western productions, Benno and those attendant zombie Huntsmen have been banished from the ballet, and what a blessing this is! The presence of Benno, that odd school-friend of Siegfried's who follows him around like a pet dog, sycophantic and useless, is nothing but an accident of history.

In 1894 when Ivanov first prepared the Second Act of the ballet for the Tchaikovsky Memorial performance, the great and celebrated Pavel Gerdt was *premier danseur* at the Maryinsky, and danced all the leading rôles as by divine right. While this saved casting problems it also raised difficulties, for the illustrious Gerdt was then a well-preserved man of fifty, and had been *premier danseur* for all but thirty years. While all were much impressed by his style and bearing, there seems little doubt that technically he was, to be generous, past his best.

The device of Benno, the armour-bearer, was an expedient of Ivanov, to overcome this local difficulty. Siegfried walked about, with all the style and bearing in the world, but the actual partnering was done by the good-natured Benno. This is why — and it may have puzzled the thoughtful — in our Western productions, Siegfried at the climax of his passion gently presents Odette into the dignified arms of Benno, his best friend. The solution is that originally it was Benno who had the partnering and *he* is handing Odette back to the Prince. After Gerdt's eventual retirement (he was still on stage a year before his death in 1917, but had relinquished *premier danseur* rôles some time previously) more ambitious and youthful Siegfrieds came along, who changed places with Benno in the Second Act, doing their own partnering.

Even so Benno's part was for some years retained, although once Gerdt had gone it became redundant. Thus it has found its way into Western productions, and the time has surely come for it to find its way out again. The presence of Benno in the Second Act is intrusive and ridiculous. Here is Siegfried at the supreme moment of his life, wrapped in poetic colloquy with the mistress of his dreams, and Benno drops along to play gooseberry (or should it be swanberry?) Those gawping dummies, the huntsmen, sliding on and off the scene like movable chunks of the setting, are even more unwelcome, for here the ballet lapses into absolute nonsense. Are we really expected to swallow that Siegfried's encounter with the enchanted maidens was witnessed by half his court, and yet caused so little comment that he was able to go back and behave as though nothing had happened? Even if this is to be overlooked, it is surely more poignant for Siegfried's experience to be personal and unique. The message is clear — Benno and the Huntsmen must go home, and all men of goodwill might like to consider chalking this on the walls of Covent Garden. I digress, but with purpose. The choreography of this First Act (i.e., our Second) is much as we know it, although of course the absence of Messrs. Benno & Co. has necessitated a few changes. Sergeyev has also choreographed a new dance for four Leading Swans, which is nothing like so effective as Ivanov's version for two. It is perhaps also a pity to have lost the scene where Odette protects her brood from the threatening arrows of the huntsmen. But this is a small price to pay for poetic credibility, and in any case Sergeyev has replaced this with such a sumptuously beautiful and evocative tableau, that the loss, if any, is only marginal.

ODILE: Inna Zubkovskaya as Odile in the third act of Sergeyev's version of Swan Lake. *Photo: Anthony Crickmay*

As a production this First Act is vastly superior to the Royal Ballet's. Virsaladze's superbly Romantic setting is described below by Peter Williams, and its effectiveness is greatly helped by the fine mechanical, but not *mechanical,* swans which swim so realistically across the lake, and the excellent contrivance of Rothbart's entry, where he flies down in the shape of an owl, before immediately assuming human proportions. A smaller production point, yet a vital one, is the manner in which Siegfried stays on stage to watch Odette dance her variation. This should be standard in all Western productions, for reasons too obvious even to mention. I was far less happy about the schmaltzy harp *glissandi* introduced into the score at the beginning of the *pas de deux.* The Kirov were too fond of harps, and even brought one in for the Rose Adagio of *The Sleeping Beauty.*

The second (Third) Act is less persuasive, being perhaps more a triumph for Virsaladze than for Sergeyev. The most important production problem posed by the Third Act is that of finding some way in which the old-fashioned *divertissement* can be embraced into the dramatic structure of the ballet. Sergeyev's version no more offers a solution to this than does the Royal Ballet's — although two approaches are in fact possible. The first, used by Vladimir Bourmeister, is to make all these national dances part of Rothbart's "suite". This is intensely dramatic, and although it can be commended, it would hardly have fitted in with Sergeyev's deliberately soft-toned approach to the act. The alternative, however, provided by Mary Skeaping in Stockholm, would have been perfectly suitable for Sergeyev's purpose, and this is to give all the prospective Brides a differing nationality, allowing each group of the national dancers to be attached as courtiers to the appropriate princess. What Sergeyev has done is to use the Jester to introduce some of the dances, in addition to the Master of Ceremonies, and this does provide a rather more positive link than the Royal Ballet's original version.

It seems a mistake for Sergeyev to let Siegfried and Odile rush off together as soon as Odile enters, as any audience worth its salt is bound to wonder what they are doing out there in the library or wherever they've taken themselves. But at least Sergeyev does not, as the Royal Ballet does, let them enter from different sides of the stage for the Black Swan *pas de deux*! I like the idea of Siegfried being able to see the vision of Odette (it is far more dramatic), yet I was less sure about the whole-heartedly "evil" characterisation given to Odile in this production. This seemed unsubtle and unconvincing, for Odette and Odile were made so markedly different that it was difficult to see how Siegfried could possibly have been taken in by the enchantress's blandishments.

Choreographically this act was rather more like the Royal Ballet's than was the Bolshoi production. The dance of the prospective Brides was not entirely dissimilar, and it was curious to note that they still retained the arm movements as if they were waving their original fans. although the fans themselves had passed into history. It uses the Clowns' Dance, for the Jester accompanied by a female *corps,* which could be with advantage incorporated into our production, as indeed might the Jester himself. The Spanish Dance is given here, as with the Bolshoi, in the Gorsky version, which is probably the only version any self-respecting ballet company should consider. If the Gorsky Spanish Dance should be regarded as definitive, then so should the Ashton Neapolitan, and this Leningrad version (it was not the Petipa original which has been produced here by International Ballet) proved a pale, watery arrangement, led by a boy and a girl supported by a female *corps.* The Czardas and Mazurka were the original Petipa, and startlingly similar to those in the Royal Ballet's production. By an odd coincidence, both the Kirov and ourselves have amended the ending of the Mazurka, which should finish with the performers dancing off stage at the end. The snap ending was suggested to the

THE JESTER: Alexandre Livshitz as the Jester in Act I of Swan Lake. *This rôle is not used in most Western productions of the ballet.*

Royal Ballet by Yurek Lazovsky in New York a few years ago; I wonder who did the same disservice for the Kirov? Typical both of the company and of the production, the Black Swan *pas de deux* was choreographically rather less flamboyant than we are used to in the West.

The last Act seemed rather more Gorsky/Sergeyev than Ivanov. Some of the elegiac tableaux were certainly breathtakingly beautiful, but they also seemed slightly out of period, although this may merely be the old demon of unfamiliarity breeding distrust. As in the Bolshoi production Rothbart is given a much more positive part to play in this act (which is to the good), and the production has a "happy" temporal ending, which to my mind is deplorable, this being the only major blot on an otherwise nearly faultless production. The happy, realistic ending was, I think, first introduced by Gorsky, but interestingly was discarded in both of his major revisions of 1920 and 1922. Nowadays it is usual in Soviet productions. Whereas in the West, Odette and Siegfried defeat Rothbart by sacrificing their lives, and find happiness in an apotheosis which takes them to another world, the current Soviet conception is for Siegfried to engage Rothbart in single combat, and sustained by Odette's love, to slay him, rescuing the Swan Maiden from enchantment.

The defence for this conception was put by Galina Ulanova, when she wrote: "Such an ending is justified not only because it corresponds more to our view of the world, but because the very music of the finale, although choral, is written in a major key, which gives us the right to treat the end of *Swan Lake* exactly as it is treated today." This I consider specious, for the major key only infers a triumphant ending, and Tchaikovsky's ending was equally as triumphant as the Soviet revision. As for "our view of the world", it seems a poor view that cannot embrace, even at an agnostically poetic level, the validity of human sacrifice in a myth. A more positive argument for the ending might be found in the dramatic power of the combat between Siegfried and Rothbart, and also for the impact of the hero tearing off Rothbart's wing, leaving him maimed and dying on the ground. But there is something petty in such literalism, and one wonders why, as it seems as simple as tearing a wing off a fly, Siegfried did not try his luck in the First Act.

However, these few blemishes apart, it would be difficult to envisage a more convincing or sensitive *Swan Lake*. Neither slavishly traditional, nor outlandishly revolutionary, this production should act as an inspiration to us, when we in England undertake that new production of the ballet which surely cannot now be far away.

DANCING — Russian ballet students seem to start as cygnets, develop naturally into swans, and tend to make all other nationalities look like ducks! Of course this is unfair, but I think it must be admitted that Russian swans do have something special about them. In a sense these Kirov performances were dominated by their wonderfully fluid and expressive *corps de ballet*, a flock of swans wheeling imperiously across the stage, beating their wings in ecstatic eloquence. The season saw three pairs as Odette/Odile and Siegfried: Inna Zubkovskaya and Vladilen Semenov; Olga Moiseyeva and Sergei Vikulov; Alla Osipenko and Yuri Soloviev.

The first, and perhaps the best, of the Odette/Odiles was Zubkovskaya, a majestic, passionate Swan Queen, beautifully fluent with a broad, fascinating *plastique*. She looked the sort of swan who really could break a man's arm in two, yet the strength was graceful and womanly. Strangely for a dancer originating from the Bolshoi School (she was a classmate of our own Violetta Elvin) she seemed to care little about dramatic projection, being perfectly content to let her dancing speak out for itself. This underscored approach, however, was only true of her white acts, as Odile she glowered balefully, perhaps too much for our prissy English taste, but this uninhibitedly histrionic approach was to be found in all three Odiles.

Moiseyeva, let me confess, proved to be my blind spot. That she was perfectly schooled was evident from her smallest gesture; that she quite possibly represented an older style of dancing might be guessed from the fleeting resemblance she sometimes bore to photographs of the old Maryinsky ballerinas. Unfortunately I found her dancing sentimental (i.e., all outward feeling with little inward conviction) and her style was stiff and mannered, apparently aimed at a grandeur she never quite attained. Technically she was strong, and she turned 32 impeccable *fouettés*, yet she had an unfortunate habit of poking her head forward, thus spoiling her line.

Osipenko I first saw dance Odette in Paris five years ago with the Stanislavsky Company. Then I thought she was astonishingly promising, and now, still young, she has already fulfilled most of my hopes. Lithe and sinuous, everything she does is given a tiny personal imprint, and her extended line has an air of effortless nobility. Her exit in the "Second" Act, with her wings beating inexorably, had a tragic poignancy that strangely enough she was unable to sustain in her less effective last act. Her acting, however, had more expressiveness than the other two ballerinas, and like them her Black Swan was strongly danced, although she chose the least effective version of the three different *codas*. (Incidentally this *coda* for Odile was the only passage of choreography during the whole season which was subject to individual differences from dancer to dancer.)

As Siegfried that admirable stylist, Semenov, found his best rôle. Likeable and modest, his interpretation proved a model of good taste, and his careful acting had its own measure of distinction. His dancing was beautiful, yet perhaps lacking something in sheer animal excitement. Every step, however, seemed perfectly articulated and was given a special quality of elegance.

It is perhaps unfair to be too hard on Vikulov, for had it not been for Nureyev's desertion in Paris, presumably he would not have been called upon to undertake this rôle. He showed strength and virility, partnered most nobly and acted with charm. Unfortunately his performance lacked finesse, his dancing seemed uncertain and his personality proved rather small-scale to maintain a full-length rôle. Soloviev made a very young Prince, with all the natural ardour of youth in something of the manner of a Caj Selling or Christopher Gable. He found an instinctive sympathy with Osipenko and they worked extraordinarily well together. His acting appeared somewhat sketchy, but was informed with such an air of identification that he was almost completely convincing. His bouyant, free-as-air dancing, with all its exquisite stylishness, provided a sensation in the Black Act. If Nureyev was as good as this, then it is difficult to see how

Nureyev has been compared only with Golovine. His last act entry, careering in with heroic doom hanging around him like a pall, proved one of the most musical pieces of dance-acting the season provided.

Rothbart in this version, as in all Soviet productions, is far more dominating than in Western practice, and that fine artist, Igor Chernishev, made the most of his malevolent opportunities. Both of the Jesters, Alexandre Livshitz and Alexandre Pavlovsky, combined wit with dazzling technique. The mercurial Livshitz was perhaps marginally the better, but Pavlovsky's robust dancing was hardly inferior. Both produced an exhilarating series of *pirouettes à la séconde* which regularly brought the house down.

The *Pas de Trois* was perhaps most notable for the radiant dancing of Alla Sizova in the first variation, setting a new standard of perfection in this dance. Xenia Ter-Stepanova was only slightly less brilliant in the second variation, and together they made a most remarkable pair. The boy, the young Vassili Ivanov, was terribly hampered by nerves on the first night, but improved markedly to give some fine performances as the season progressed.

He needs more elevation and attack, which could make his very polished dancing more obviously brilliant. At a couple of performances Sizova's place was taken by the attractive Ludmilla Alexeyeva, who danced nicely without effacing the memory of her predecessor.

In the Black Act, both the Czardas (splendidly led by Aria Pestova and the sardonic Yevgeni Ivanov) and the Mazurka were performed with consummate style, while Galina Kekisheva and Oleg Sokolov did their considerable best with the Neapolitan Dance. For all who remember the Bolshoi, the Spanish Dance came as something of a disappointment — the alluring Irina Gensler proved the best of the quartet, but even the normally excellent Anatoli Sapogov looked miscast and overtense.

The four little Cygnets — easily the best I have ever seen — were Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Galina Ivanova, Galina Kekisheva and Galina Issakova, with sometimes Marina Vassilieva in place of Alexeyeva. The two Leading Swans were danced with almost equal success by either Alexeyeva and Ivanova, or Natalia Makarova and Gabrielle Komleva.

The only important mime rôles left in this production are Wolfgang, the Tutor, and the Princess Mother. Khashim Mustayev proved quite delicious as the bibulous Tutor, a lovable, completely credible rascal, not without dignity. Iraida Utretskaya's Princess Mother had a haughty disdain that never quite obscured the natural charm of her personality, and finally there was the wonderful *corps de ballet* . . . which is where I came in.

Clive Barnes.

DECOR — Watteau is never a painter that I associate with the German Romantic Gothicism of *Swan Lake.* Yet, come to think of it, there really seems to be no reason why I shouldn't. Anyway Watteau and his school, with possibly a little bit of Corot thrown in, appear to have influenced Simon Virsaladze and the result is one of the best designed productions of this ballet that I have seen. It has a unity of conception that I have not seen in any of the other ballets shown by the Kirov company during their London season.

The whole ballet is suffused with blurred outlines, and it achieves a dreamlike quality. In the first act the environment of the castle is only hinted at and suggests a rather "secret" place in the garden. This I liked, and how much better than those Walt Disney castles which usually make the opening scene look like a dentifrice advertisement. The general effect was of misty morning and less autumnal than the Bolshoi or Royal Ballet settings for the same act. The trees had the soft green of olives and poplars, the colour predominating in the costumes was pale mauve for the *corps de ballet,* a colour I don't much care for on the stage but this is merely personal, and anyway the general effect was agreeable and certainly most inoffensive. Occasional colour accent came from the Princess Mother and her attendants while Prince Siegfried was in black and white and so too was the Jester. The costumes did not appear to belong to any particular period though there was a decided medieval trend. It is possibly better in fairy tales not to stick too rigorously to a particular date because anyway these stories are ageless.

The three friends of the Prince, the ones who dance the *pas de trois,* were in apple green and I was delighted to see that the two girls wore long skirts. This at last confirms what I have always felt about these costumes. Some years ago when I was designing these costumes for a company, I made the skirts long because I firmly believed that these people should be no different to their surrounding friends. There was quite a rumpus and I was slapped down and made to shorten the skirts because I was told that tutus were traditional for this *pas de trois* and that anyway long skirts were wrong for the choreography — I bowed out, defeated but unconvinced. The Kirov has proved that I was right on this point. After all, the peasant *pas de deux* in *Giselle* uses long skirts to conform to the rest of the designing and the situation in this first act of *Swan Lake* is mighty similar. From now on I will no more accept short tutus for these people than will I accept long skirts for the *corps de ballet* of swans in the second act.

Water predominated in the Kirov's second act — a great expanse of rippling water on which swans drifted with complete conviction. Above the water a huge owl swooped down and when it alighted on a rock it swooped up again in the more human form of Von Rothbart — a simple but highly dramatic effect. It is this kind of thing which gives added interest to these old ballets and for the life of me I cannot see why, in the West, we tend to shun them. They are not difficult to manipulate and all that is needed is a little ingenuity on the part of the designer and producer.

For some years now I have subscribed to the general belief that the Soviet cannot make tutus, an opinion that I understand is also held by the Russians. I think that I am starting to change my views. There is a softness that is pleasing about these net tutus and after having looked at the Kirov almost nightly for four weeks, I find our stiff Western tutus rather clumsy and quite often they give the dancers an ugly line. Anyway the Soviet soft line seems wholly right for these swan-women (are they swans or women or what? nobody ever seems clear on this point) and I thought them equally fitting for the fairies in *The Sleeping Beauty.*

I found the second and last act designing the best I had ever seen, that is until I saw what Festival Ballet now uses and about which I will write next month. But nobody to my mind has brought off the ballroom scene so successfully as does Virsaladze in this Kirov production. It may have been a question of expediency because I notice that in the photographs of the production as it is given at the Kirov that the foreground is identical to what we saw at Covent Garden — alcoves and a balcony of massive grey stone with three gothic arches at the back. The change has come about in what is seen through those arches. In Russia there is a perspective of staircases and corridors, at Covent Garden we saw a garden. Now the change may have been made so as to get the set on to a stage of less depth, but the change is for the better. Somehow it forges the acts together and helps the continuity. It gives the appearance of a vast patio and a most suitable place for a ball to be held. It is less sinister than this act usually is but there is no real reason why it should be sinister as nothing

MAZURKA DANCERS: Four of the eight dancers who appear in the Mazurka during the ball in the third act of Swan Lake. *Photo: Anthony Crickmay*

in the story indicates that the Princess Mother and her son and attendant court are particularly evil people, it is only that the prince unwittingly gets involved in the evil power of Von Rothbart. His sudden appearance, with his daughter Odile, in this rather gentle and agreeable environment is far more dramatic than is usual.

This intrusion of the great "outdoors" into the ballroom scene as well as forming a link with the previous acts also makes the vision of Odette far more plausible. The actual painting of these arboreal vistas was wholly admirable — either painted on gauze, or a canvas backcloth was softened down with a gauze hung in front — and one can only hope that some of our scene-painters, especially those who tend to make everything look as though they are painting in Walpamur, made a careful study.

As in the opening scene the costumes in this act were muted in colour and occasional heightening came from the purple on the Czardas costumes or the scarlet on the white and gold Mazurka dancers.

Back to the lakeside for the final act and a new lighting plot which, together with the opening group of swans, provoked applause as the curtains parted. I like the way that Von Rothbart's castle melted rather than collapsed.

The whole approach to the designing of this *Swan Lake* pointed to the right, and only, way for treating 19th-century classics of this kind. First and foremost it was Romantic, it was unobtrusive and it let the choreography and music tell its story uncluttered by any chi-chi whatsoever and thus a marriage between ballet's various elements was consummated in the most satisfactory manner possible. This is the goal which every Artistic Director and designer should strive for, is it not?

Peter Williams.

Gala Programme

First given at Covent Garden on July 4, 1961.

THE Kirov's Gala Programme came as a disappointment, but went as a triumph. The disappointment was the non-materialisation of *Chopiniana* and Igor Belsky's new ballet to the first movement of Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony. Fokine's *Chopiniana (Les Sylphides)* had been promised in the preliminary announcements — indeed it continued to be promised by the posters outside Covent Garden right up to the last performance of the Gala Programme — and I believe the original intention had been to couple it with the short-value programme, *Giselle.*

However, space could not be found for it, and most regrettably it was never danced. It would have been fascinating to have seen this company in the great Fokine classic, but the omission of the Belsky was cause for even greater regret. Although this was never officially announced, the Russians were at one time thinking of giving it here. The company stated in London that they were advised that the British public would only want to see 19th-century classics. This blunder meant that we were denied the opportunity of seeing the latest advances in Soviet choreography, and it is only small comfort to us that later in the year, New York is apparently to be showing not only Belsky's *Leningrad,* but also his earlier *Coast of Hope,* as well as Grigorovich's latest ballet, *Legend of Love.*

Enough of carping about what didn't happen. This *Gala Programme* opened with a fascinating episode from Petipa's old ballet, *La Bayadère.* First produced in 1877, the ballet which is sometimes still given in full in Russia has a complicated libretto about the temple dancer, Nikiya and her love for the Indian warrior, Solor. The ballet has never been produced in England, although in 1947 for a season at the Adelphi Theatre, Nicolai Sergueeff rehearsed part of it from his Stepanoff script for Mona Inglesby's International Ballet. Unfortunately, owing to the illness of Nana Gollner who was to have danced in it, the project came to nothing.

This present Kirov excerpt was the most famous episode from the ballet, the Kingdom of the Shades. In Russia it is one of the most celebrated passages of choreography in all of Petipa, and is frequently compared with the last act of *Giselle,* being regarded as the final late flowering of the old Romantic ballet, prior to the more forward-looking innovations of Ivanov, and Petipa himself.

The more the world changes the less movement we find upon it, and this Kingdom of the Shades, as produced here with the narrative reduced to little more than a vestigial furrow of worry creasing the hero's brow, looked for all the world like George Balanchine in a non-avant-garde mood. Except, of course, Balanchine would hardly today use the tuneful jingle of Minkus's cheerfully meretricious music — or would he?

The excerpt opens with a most thrilling *coup de théâtre,* where a seemingly never-ending line of girls descend slowly down a ramp, pausing every moment in a sequence of *arabesques.* This processional opening, stately and magnificent, goes on and on, until the stage is full of white-clad girls, who eventually break into the *ensembles.* Conventional and yet not conventional, these dances showed the Leningrad school at its most expansively luxuriant. In a sense it is what the last act of *Napoli* is to the Danes, what *Symphony in C* is to the Americans or what *Symphonic Variations* is to us — the apotheosis of their school. Like all these other exercises in pure style perfectly executed, it made me want to shout with joy that the world has such dancers in it. (What a wonderful summit meeting of dance these four examples of academic ballet would make — a *pas de quatre* to end all *pas de quatre!)*

This *Bayadère* excerpt was beautifully danced, with Olga Moiseyeva finding her best form of the season. For the first time I began to understand the high esteem in which she is held in Russia, even though there were moments when I personally thought she seemed more like an exaggerated caricature of the Russian style, than that style itself. She walked badly with an almost self-conscious waddle, and she lacked the continuity of line, the effortlessly singing flow which seems to be the major Soviet contribution to the old Russian tradition. Her partner, Vikulov, gallantly attempted a variation for which nature had not really fitted him. He got through it creditably, but his hunched shoulders and flaccid feet won no prizes for style in a ballet where style is everything.

The best of the dancing, in addition to the splendidly organic *ensemble,* came from three *coryphées,* Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Inna Korneyeva and Gabrielle Komleva, who danced their three fiendishly difficult variations with such ease and aplomb that the sight of them caused no more surprise than seeing birds flying.

After the interval came the *divertissement* section, opening with an excerpt from Vainonen's production of *The Nutcracker.* I have always understood that in Russia this production was normally reserved for students, but if they really have students who can dance *this,* then I'm afraid the rest of the world had better go back to school! Described simply as the *Rose Waltz from The Nutcracker,* it consisted of the *Valse des Fleurs* danced by the *ensemble* led by four couples, the *Adagio* from the *Pas de Deux* (danced by the ballerina, her partner, and four additional cavaliers), the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, the male variation, and the ballet's Finale. Brilliantly choreographed by Vainonen, the highlight was undoubtedly the almost unbelievable Adagio danced by Irina Kolpakova and Oleg Sokolov, together with Sergei Vikulov, Anatoli Gridin, Vassili Ivanov and one unidentifiable young man, who looked almost exactly like Vassili Ivanov! Exquisite Kolpakova proved the most natural Sugar Plum Fairy anyone could envisage, the spun-glass perfection of her technique, the delicacy of her line and the dazzling lightness of her dancing made her a creature of dreams. When Vikulov threw her through the air in perfect *arabesque* high into the arms of her partner, Sokolov, they gave us a moment of the purest physical excitement.

After this the "choreographic miniatures", three by Leonid Jacobsen and one by Chabukiani, came as something of a let down. Jacobsen's miniatures are very highly regarded in Russia, and when he produced twenty-two of them as a complete programme at the Kirov Theatre on December 31, 1958, his fame was henceforward assured. We have already seen one of them, *The Hunter and the Bird,* performed by the Bolshoi dancers last year at the Albert Hall, and my own feeling is that they are clever, often quite inventive, but too light-weight. The best of them seen here is undoubtedly *The Snow Maiden,* set to *Two Fleeting Moments* by Prokofiev, and well danced by Galina Kekisheva. This dance image — it is little more — of a snow maiden melting in the sun, possesses ingenuity, but on the whole Jacobsen seems more interested in a peculiarly personal form of dance-sculpture than in choreography. Xenia Ter-Stepanova and the ebullient Alexandre Pavlovsky gave an attractively brash performance of Vainonen's *pas de deux* from *The Flames of Paris.*

The section ended with Olga Moiseyeva's unduly forlorn interpretation of Fokine's *Dying Swan,* which was clearly more to the audience's taste than mine, so much so that she was prevailed upon to give an encore.

Up to this point, in all their programmes the Kirov had shown the reticent eloquence of their marvellous school, their taste and style, their under-scored, almost throwaway brilliance, and showed themselves to be the kind of dancers whose memories are cherished by connoisseurs for a lifetime. However, they had shown little of the electric, crowd-gasping virtuosity that had been one of the features of the Bolshoi Ballet, or, for that matter, the Moiseyev Dance Ensemble. It was something almost like a casual afterthought, that right at the eleventh hour they produced a scene from *Taras Bulba,* which not only sent the audience into a wild frenzy of excitement, but also revealed just the style of dancing that people were going around saying they lacked.

The story of Taras Bulba and his sons Andrei and Ostap, is based on a short story by Nikolai Gogol. It first provided the

theme for a symphonic poem by the Czech composer, Janacek, and then in 1941, V. Soloviev-Sedoi used it for the present ballet score. Unfortunately he wrote it as a piano score, and handed its orchestration over to nameless "co-authors and orchestrators" who prepared two different versions of the score, one for Moscow and one for Leningrad, an occurrence which appears to have caused something of a scandal at the time. Quite a number of choreographers have tried their hand at *Taras Bulba,* this present version dating from June, 1955, when it was choreographed by the late Boris Fenster, a ballet-master who was principal choreographer to the Kirov until his recent death.

The scene here is where Taras Bulba brings his sons to a Cossack camp on the banks of the Dnieper. In the excerpt given — and it made one hungry to see the complete ballet — there is no story perceptible, and it is merely twenty minutes of staggering Cossack dancing. After a few comic interludes preceding the entrance of Bulba, finely portrayed by Igor Belsky, the ballet mounts up to an incredible climax of dancing, with the dancers all but exploding on the stage. For the most part it is an all-male *ensemble* work given with the sort of vigour that makes even the average Moiseyev number seem as tame as a tea-party by comparison. Now and again a man breaks away from the *ensemble,* like the vast, bald-headed Yuri Korneyev who pounds up and down in a series of huge jumps, or another who hurtles across the stage, crashing down on his knees in the characteristic Cossack manner. Bulba's two sons (Yuri Soloviev and Oleg Sokolov) enter into a friendly competition, with Sokolov wheeling round the stage in a series of great jumps, while Soloviev (or, at some performances, Pavlovsky) spins round in a curvetting circle at dazzling speed. Finally, as a climax, Alexandre Livshitz takes the stage and does one, two, three circuits in a series of high, slow, somersaulting jumps, as the applause of the audience, which has been building up, suddenly breaks out into a prolonged crescendo of cheers, and the *ensemble* moves to its swirling final curtain. Apart from the dancers mentioned, praise must also be given to Alexei Zhitkov and Lev Sokolov, one of whom danced a delightful Drunk at the beginning of the ballet, the other doing the knee-crashing solo, although under all that make-up I never did discover which did what.

C. B.

FIRST TIME AS AURORA: On July 14, Alla Sizova danced Princess Aurora in The Sleeping Beauty *for the first time. Here she is with her partner, Oleg Sokolov in the fourth act. Their performances were reviewed last month. Photo: Roy Round*

POSTSCRIPT
by Clive Barnes

THE word ballet is derived from the Italian ballare, *to dance.*

When we started out on our reviews of the Kirov Ballet last month, in the *Prelude,* Peter Williams wrote: "Ballet, whether it be dramatic, atmospheric, classical, abstract or so-called modern, is DANCE. And it was dance that the Leningrad company showed us . . ." It was indeed.

It would be ponderous to dwell at length upon the lessons of the season, lessons which should be so self-evident that no amount of sermonising by us could make them more apparent. But perhaps a couple of points still need to be stressed.

In Western Europe and, to a lesser extent, in America, we have been taught to believe that Diaghilev rescued ballet from a fate worse than death. This is not true. Diaghilev did not save ballet, he packaged it for immediate Western consumption. Diaghilev was a great impresario, a superb man of the theatre, and a smart cookie. I have no doubt that almost every ballet company in the world could do with him on their pay-roll. He, more than any other person, is responsible for the state, more, the existence, of Western ballet today. He did a great deal of good, but a misunderstanding of what he did has led, and still leads, to a certain amount of harm.

He was a supreme opportunist, and a diplomatic master at expediency and compromise. It took a kind of genius to appreciate that the revolutionary upsurging in Russian ballet at the beginning of the century, led by Fokine and Benois, provided him with the chance to form a ballet company around his friend, Nijinsky. Equally it took a kind of genius to realise that the Western world was ready and waiting for the re-introduction of serious ballet — had he read Mallarmé and the other Western dance theorists, one wonders? — and that such a re-introduction could only come from Russia, as even the technical standards of the art had gone into decline everywhere else, except in the then backwater of Copenhagen.

He was a man of unusual culture and taste, as for example was Petipa's mentor, Vsevolojsky, and like Vsevolojsky, he believed that ballet should be a collaboration of the arts at the highest possible level. This was nothing unusual and merely represented what most forward-looking men interested in ballet were thinking at that time.

Naturally Diaghilev's company, a splinter group from the Maryinsky with a few dancers from the Bolshoi, dancing Fokine's finest ballets (many of which in the early seasons had been produced without Diaghilev's help, in Russia) enjoyed a fantastic success. Cut off from Russia, first by the expulsion of Nijinsky from the Maryinsky (probably engineered by Diaghilev himself) and later by the war and revolution, his company soon started to flounder. He made one desperate and gallant effort to keep it afloat by producing the full-length *Sleeping Beauty* in 1921, but for once Diaghilev showed himself to be out of touch with the audience, and through no fault of his own the production flopped. After this failure to recapture his St. Petersburg youth, his interest in ballet, possibly never particularly strong, seems to have waned, and his company appears to have meandered exquisitely on producing a series of airy, fashionable nothingnesses until his death in 1929. As it was more a brand-name than a company it could not survive his death, although its dancers later formed up into different groups, which persisted until the early years of the second world war.

This brief account may seem unjust to Diaghilev's memory — it ignores, for example, the creation of *Apollo* and *The Prodigal Son,* although Diaghilev did not appear to have a great deal to do with those productions, and Balanchine was a rising genius fate fortuitously tossed into his lap — yet I suspect it may more closely resemble the way in which he will be viewed by the dance historian of fifty years time, than the present load of panegyric that he customarily receives today. However my point is that during the last years (the last decade) of the Diaghilev Ballet, the emphasis was of necessity taken off the choreography and dancing and placed upon the décor and music. Those were the days when people rushed to see the new "Picasso" ballet, or the new "Stravinsky" ballet, and the reason for this, quite simply, was that Diaghilev, cut off from the source of his

FAREWELL : Oleg Sokolov, as the Bluebird, from the last act of The Sleeping Beauty, *flies away. A rôle he danced in Paris but not London.* *Photo : Roy Round*

dancers and his inspiration, had to keep his company going by other means.

The wrong interpretation of these years of struggle has resulted in the formulation of what I have called the " Diaghilev heresy ", namely that all the arts combining in the art of ballet are of *equal* importance one to another. This aesthetic principle, which has luckily had more important effects on the formation of critical standards than audience taste, has in the past led to the critical cold-shoulder being given to Balanchine's New York City Ballet, the modified credit critically accorded the Bolshoi, the initial critical rejection of such ballets as Ashton's *Les Deux Pigeons,* and a certain coldness in some quarters over the present season of the Kirov Ballet.

By trying to pretend that the music, décor or even the *story* in any specifically *literary* sense (of course all ballet — even plotless — must be dramatic in the broadest sense and must be theatrically viable) are of equal significance in ballet to the choreography and dancing, people have for years been tending to reduce ballet to the level of chi-chi charades, and effectively denied the unique expressiveness of the dance.

Any fool can see that Grigorovich's *Stone Flower* would have been an even better ballet if Prokofiev had turned up with a less derivative score, but to let this blind one to the wonderful expressiveness and serious purpose of the dancing is nothing but obtuse. Almost equally obtuse and rather more sinister is the attitude — so convenient to those Western observers who, feeling no doubt that it is a lost cause to press the superiority of Western dancers, feel a chauvinistic compulsion to decry Soviet choreography — that allows no credit to the choreographer for the skill of the dancers. Do these people seriously imagine, as they often contrive to imply, that the dancers make the steps up as they go along ?

Once more writ plain, but perhaps writ plainer than ever before, the Kirov Ballet has shown us that : " Ballet, whether it be dramatic, atmospheric, classical, abstract or so-called modern, is DANCE." This has been demonstrated by the Kirov Ballet, by the Bolshoi Ballet, by the New York City Ballet, by the Royal Danish Ballet, by the Martha Graham company, by Ballets : U.S.A., by the Moiseyev Ensemble, by every worthwhile British ballet that has ever seen the light of day. When, oh, when are some of our senior critics going to realise it, forget Diaghilev and the heresy that has been unfairly perpetrated in his name, and join the ballet audience.

One last point, about the Kirov — this season has emphasised that there is still Russian ballet, Moscow-style and Russian ballet, Leningrad-style. Before the season opened, *just* before, one English writer rushed in to announce to a breathless world that there was no difference between the two schools, implying that both were just about as predictable as one another. He should have waited until after the first performance, when it would have looked more like an opinion, but it would not have been any the less false.

In Iris Morley's still very interesting account, *Soviet Ballet,* published in 1945, she quotes the then " Bolshoi " ballerina, Marina Semyonova, as saying : " I was sent here " (from the Kirov) " to try and bring style to the Bolshoi ", and in the same book we find Ulanova (still then nominally a Leningrad dancer) quoted as saying : " Moscow, of course, is better now that they have Leningrad teachers ; it is a *kulturny spectakl,* but of course not yet comparable to the Kirovsky." Of course — and just this same note of patronage and sometimes something fiercer, could occasionally be detected when even expatriate Maryinsky dancers were first confronted with the Bolshoi, yet most of them seem to have accepted the Kirov without batting an eyelid. And have not we all heard the wealth of meaning an ex-Diaghilev, St. Petersburg dancer can put into that simple disyllable — *Moscow ?*

It would not be seemly for an ill-tutored Englishman to make any choice between the two schools, but one cannot but be amused at some of the Soviet attempts to suggest that any differences that once existed have long since disappeared, and that now there is only *one* Soviet school. What I think is true is that just as Moscow and St. Petersburg once represented two views of the " Imperial Russian style ", so now Moscow and Leningrad represent two views of the " Soviet style ", and in our excitement at noticing the differences between the companies, we would do well to remember the large amount of common ground between them.

What they share, and what is new from the old " Imperial Russian " style, is a greater freedom in all steps of elevation, a more highly developed technique (of course, technique has developed all over the world during the past half-century, and perhaps even the past decade) and a generally more pronounced sense of *plastique.*

Where they appear to differ is . . . well, you might say that the Bolshoi are dance-actors, whereas the Kirov are primarily dancers. It would be too slick yet still approaching the heart of the matter. The Bolshoi have a much more expansive, even grander style, with far more general audience appeal. There is something larger-than-life about their dancing, a curious passionate ecstasy. The Kirov are, by and large, softer and more refined, gentler and more precise. They seem to care less for purely dramatic values (their approach to the classics indicates this as clearly as does their dancing) and they lack the Bolshoi's typical sense of involvement with the rôle. They have been influenced more by Vaganova than Stanislavsky — although in both companies, both influences are felt. The Bolshoi are very moving, they dance with their souls ; the Kirov have a perfection to their dancing the Bolshoi hardly aspires to. Somewhere I compared one to Beethoven and the other to Mozart and although the comparison is far-fetched, I think it does.

I loved the Bolshoi and when they went I think I felt a little envious. With their vast resources and their venerable tradition, their standards seemed remote and unapproachable. Now the Kirov have been and gone, I loved them as much, and with their almost equally vast resources and even more venerable tradition, I suppose I should again feel envious. But somehow I don't. In the past five years, since the Bolshoi were here, British ballet has accomplished a great deal. We can now see something like a distinctive school developing, and we are finding our own first classics. We are slowly (no, damn it, it's quickly) developing into a great national ballet with a style of our own, a repertory of our own, and traditions of our own, and all being well I think this is something which some of us may see accomplished within our lifetime. Which is more than I would have dared hope five years ago.

SALADE: *Designs by Barry Kay for Peter Darrell's version of the Milhaud work. Left to right, A Newspaper Vendor, Rosetta, Captain's Guard and Pulcinella and Coviello disguised as Peruvians. Below, right, a model for the centre piece of the setting.*

20th Century Revivals for Edinburgh

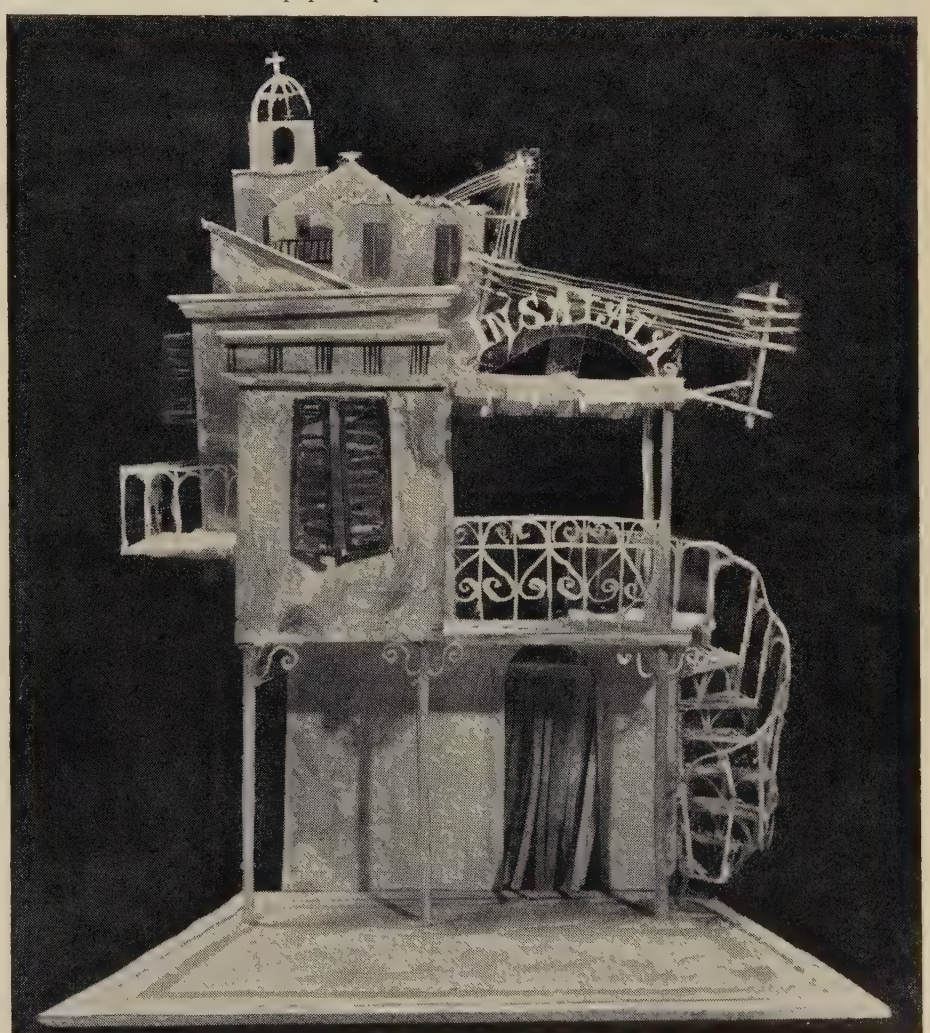
"Neither one thing nor the other" is the way in which the hand-out describes the programme which is to be specially mounted for the Edinburgh Festival at the Empire Theatre on September 4.

All three works are an unusual mixture of music, song and dance, being neither operas, ballets nor musicals and falling somewhere between all three.

In Edinburgh the three works — Salade, Le Renard **and** The Seven Deadly Sins — **are to be danced by Western Theatre Ballet to the Scottish National Orchestra (conducted by Alexander Gibson) and a chorus. Guests will be ballerina, Anya Linden and singer, Cleo Laine. The choreography and production is in the hands of Peter Darrell, Alfred Rodrigues and Kenneth MacMillan. On this and the following two pages you can see the designs for the three works.**

Salade

ON this page are Barry Kay's designs for *Salade* for which Peter Darrell has done the choreography. The ballet was first given for one of Comte Etienne de Beaumont's *Soirées de Paris* on May 17, 1924, at the Théâtre de la Cigale. These evenings of ballet were organised by the wealthy Comte, who had a profound love and understanding of ballet, mainly to display Leonide Massine's choreographic genius. From these performances there were a number of ballets created that later found their way into the repertories of other companies and have since achieved international fame. Amongst them were *Le Beau Danube* and *Scuola di Ballo* which were in the programmes of the first de Basil seasons and *Gaîté Parisienne* which, together with a new production of *Le Beau Danube,* was in the repertory of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. *Salade,* with décor by Braque and music by Milhaud, was taken into the repertory of the Paris Opéra in 1935. The production was slightly different, the singers being on the stage instead of in the orchestra pit, and there was new décor by Derain. This ballet was another work by Massine on a Commedia dell'Arte theme (the first being *Pulcinella*) and was one of the most popular pre-war ballets at the Paris Opéra where Serge Lifar danced the title rôle originally created by Massine himself.



LE RENARD : *Drawings by Australian painter Arthur Boyd for Alfred Rodrigues' version of Stravinsky's ballet. Left to right, The Fox disguised as a Nun, the Goat, the Cock. Below, the drop-curtain for the same ballet, with the Fox, the Cock, the Goat and the Cat.*

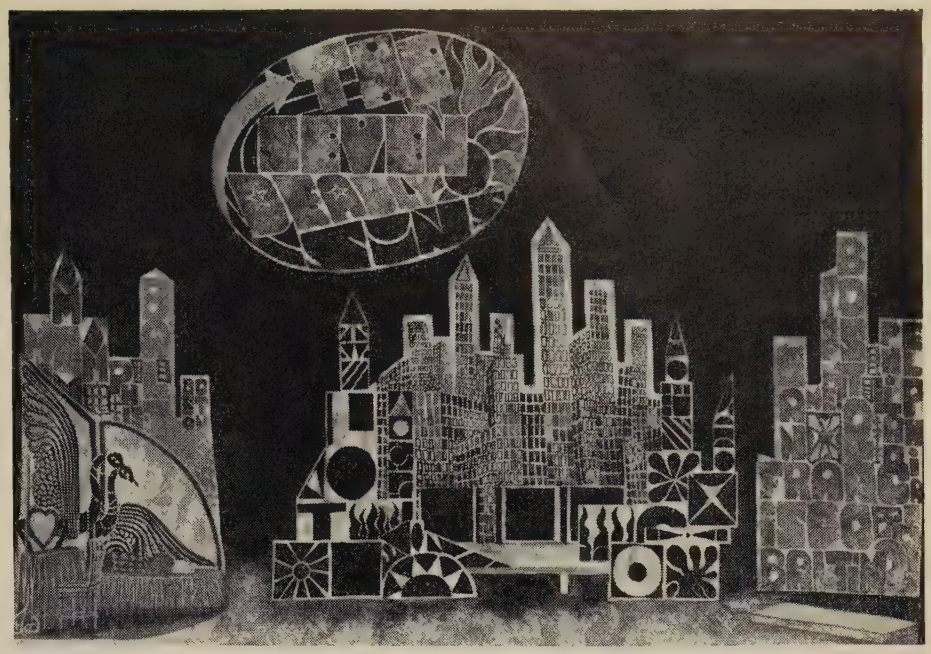
Le Renard

STRAVINSKY'S music for *Le Renard*, composed for small orchestra, was first heard in the drawing room. It had been commissioned Princesse Edmond de Polignac, and it was in her house that it was performed for the first time. It was written when Stravinsky was in Switzerland during the First World War, and was completed in 1917. It reveals a certain nostalgia on the part of Stravinsky for his homeland — Russia — and it is based on a story well-known in Russian folklore. The fable is about a cock who, with the help of a cat and a goat, eventually outwits a fox.

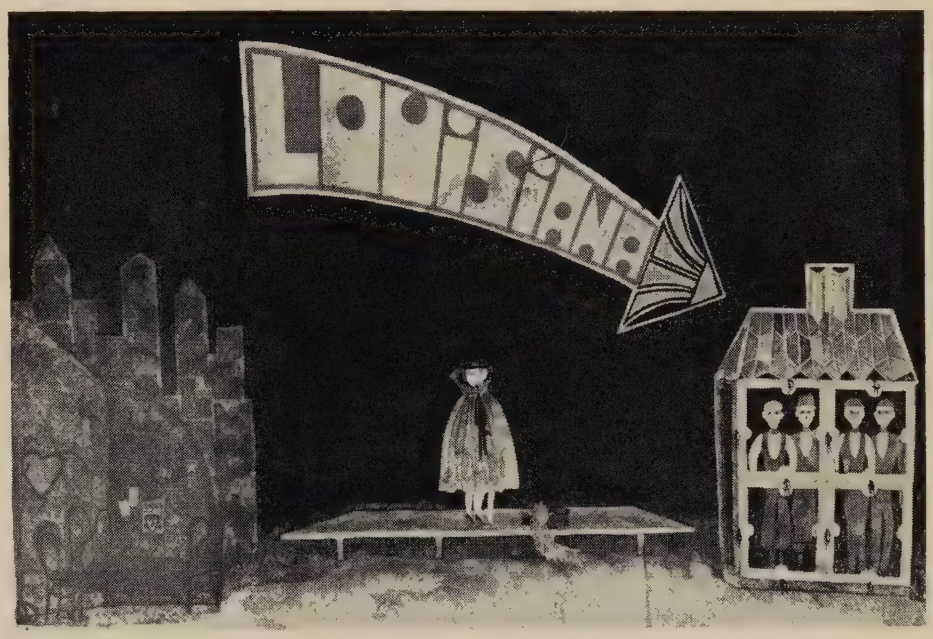
Diaghilev heard the score on its first performance and decided to mount a ballet to it which was first given by the Diaghilev Ballet at the Paris Opéra in 1922. Both the ballet's choreographer, Bronislava Nijinska, and its designer, Michel Larionov, saw the ballet as though presented as a sideshow at a fair.

In 1929, Serge Lifar re-worked the ballet for the Diaghilev company and it was his first essay in choreography — the dancers were doubled with acrobats who wore identical costumes. The most notable revival since then was by Balanchine who, in 1947, created his own version for Ballet Society with designs by Esteban Francés.

For this new version, Alfred Rodrigues has gone to the well-known Australian painter Arthur Boyd for the designing, and much of the ballet's original form, that of an impromptu fairground entertainment, has been preserved.



THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: *Designs by Ian Spurling for Kenneth MacMillan's version of the Weill/Brecht work. Above, the setting which is changed about during the ballet. Below, design for the Prologue and Epilogue. Left, two costume designs for Anya Linden and Hazel Merry as Anna — top, in the "Avarice" episode, below in the "Envy" Episode.*



The Seven Deadly Sins

KURT WEILL, who was one of Germany's leading theatre composers, fled from his native country in 1933 after his music had been banned by the Nazis. He arrived in Paris and was immediately commissioned by Boris Kochno and George Balanchine to compose a ballet. At that time Kochno and Balanchine were in the process of forming a ballet company to be known as Les Ballets 1933.

Weill only agreed to write the score if he could have a completely free hand, and the result was an interesting combination of acted story, ballet and song. The book was by Bertold Brecht, the designs by Caspar Neher. The ballet was given in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in 1933 and later in the same year at the Savoy Theatre in London, when the dual rôle of Anna-Anna (under which title the ballet was then given) was sung by Weill's wife, Lotte Lenya, and danced by Tillie Losch. Since then the ballet, which scored a great success at the time as an *avant garde* work, remained as little more than a memory until a few years ago when Balanchine revived it for New York City Ballet. Recently there have been a number of revivals in various parts of the world.

The theme is a psychological one and concerns two sisters, or they might be one with a split personality, who go out into the world to earn money so that the family can build a house in Louisiana. With each American city they visit on their journey they encounter a cardinal sin. Having tried their luck in Memphis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Baltimore and San Francisco, the sisters return to Louisiana where the family, having gained enough money, welcome them home in their newly-completed house.

For his version, Kenneth MacMillan has used Australian designer Ian Spurling, formerly a Slade student and whose early work has been seen in *Dance and Dancers*. Lotte Lenya was to have sung the Anna rôle in Edinburgh but she backed-out shortly before the opening night and has been replaced by Cleo Laine.

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STARS OF THE MIDLANDS : The International stars who came to dance in ABC Television's and Anton Dolin's Midlands Festival of Ballet at the Coventry Theatre in Coventry during July are, from left to right, Rosella Hightower, Anton Dolin, Carla Fracci, Milorad Miskovitch, Colette Marchand, John Gilpin, Natalie Krassovska, Kjeld Noack, Margrethe Schanne and conductor Fistoulari. Photo : ABC Television

curtain up!

On from the Midlands

IT looks as though the first Midlands Festival of Ballet which was directed by Anton Dolin and given at the Coventry Theatre during the week of July 11, may possibly go further than the Midlands. ABC Television, who sponsored the venture, intend to hold another festival in Coventry next year — for two weeks instead of one — and there is a possibility that it might all lead to a permanent company giving concert performances with international stars in other parts of Britain and even of Europe.

There is no doubt that the occasion provided a provincial city with the opportunity of seeing a group of famous international stars — including Rosella Hightower, Colette Marchand, André Prokovsky and Milorad Miskovitch from France, Margrethe Schanne and Kjeld Noack from Denmark, Carla Fracci from Italy, Natalie Krassovska from America, John Gilpin and Anton Dolin from Britain — in a number of items that were varied and more imaginatively presented than is usual in such performances. It also gave opportunity for students of the Arts Educational School to appear on stage and with eminent artists, and this has lead to them being invited to appear for a season in a park in Leamington Spa.

Some sort of organisation for presenting concert performances of famous stars in places where the larger companies cannot venture, has long been needed, and this may possibly be the answer, especially if the numbers are presented with more imagination than just in dreary black drapes.

The Ubiquitous Mr. G.

AS well as presenting stars rarely seen in Britain these days, the Coventry performances also marked the return of John Gilpin after his recent back injury. He was right back to his old form dancing in *Le Spectre de la Rose* and *Harlequinade* with Carla Fracci from La Scala, Milan, who is developing into one of the important ballerinas of Europe. Shortly after this, Gilpin turned up again, also in the Midlands, dancing another Harlequin, this time in Birmingham, with Western Theatre Ballet in their Karsavina revival of Fokine's *Carnaval*.

Immediately after that he started rehearsing with the Royal Ballet for their next provincial tour. He will, it appears, be dancing with the company as guest artist during the early parts of this week and from time to time returns to London to dance at Covent Garden. Whether he remains with the Royal Ballet as a permanent member of the company is, at the moment of writing, uncertain. Anyway, he is to stay with the company until the end of the year.

Britons on the Mediterranean

FOR some years now, members of the Royal Ballet have spent their annual holiday on the shores of the Mediterranean but, apart from the frequent guest appearance of Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, they have not danced there.

Now it seems that they may. For some time negotiations have been going on between Sir David Webster and the S.B.M. (the society which runs Monte Carlo), but it has never been possible for dates to be agreed upon. Monte Carlo has two ballet seasons in the year — at Christmas and Easter — but previous commitments have always made it impossible for the Royal Ballet to fit in a visit. It is now likely that the smaller section of the Royal Ballet, presumably with some stars from the Covent Garden company, will be appearing in Monte Carlo at Christmas.

Antipodean roundabout

WHEN London's Festival Ballet finish their next Christmas season at the Royal Festival Hall, it may be the last time that they will be there for some time. This is owing to the fact that a new concert hall is to be built adjoining the present one, and that extensive alterations are to be made backstage.

Plans are afoot for the company to go to Australia when they will tour with the J. C. Williamson organisation for several months starting in the early Spring of next year. If they go they will play in all the principal cities, and the length of their tour rather depends on the state of Festival Hall's construction.

Meanwhile from Australia comes the news that the re-formation of the Borovansky Ballet, for which Peggy Van Praagh contributed so much, is still undecided. It should have re-formed this Autumn, but owing to the credit squeeze this has been postponed until next year. The sooner something is decided the better, for it seems singularly unfortunate that so much hard work as was obviously put into making a permanent Australian company is gradually going to waste.

Dancing with Nijinsky

IT was to be hoped that Tamara Karsavina would be able to make a personal appearance in the charity concert to be given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in aid of Mentally Handicapped Children and the Y.W.C.A. at Festival Hall on October 6. A special feature of this concert of ballet music is an item called "I Danced with Nijinsky".

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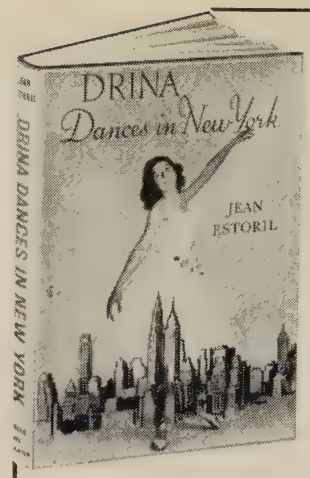
The Second part of the Provincial Tour (November/December) will be announced in the next issue of this magazine.



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Unfortunately Karsavina's doctor feels that she should not undergo any undue strain and she felt that it was impossible to make promises that she might not be able to fulfil. So as she was in sympathy with the charities concerned and wished to help in some way, she agreed to provide the material for a script dealing with her collaboration with Nijinsky in *Le Spectre de la Rose* (the music for which will be played during the programme) and also the last time she saw him in Paris. This script is to be spoken by a famous star of ballet, stage and films — Leslie Caron.

Other music in the programme includes *La Boutique Fantasque, The Firebird, Symphonic Variations,* the Grieg *Piano Concerto,* all of which were either composed specially for ballet or have been used as ballet music at one time or another.

A curious omission

THE Kirov Ballet proved themselves very anxious to please their London audiences. The appearance of Yuri Soloviev on the last night in the " Bluebird " *pas de deux* from the last act of *The Sleeping Beauty* was, I hear, in direct response to an appeal from the theatre's gallery regulars who sent flowers to every member of the company.

It seems very strange, therefore, that Natalia Dudinskaya and Konstantin Sergeyev, recognised for many years as the company's leading dancers, did not make even a token appearance as dancers, although both were warmly applauded when they took calls as teacher and choreographer on the final evening. It is no secret that many people begged for them to give at least one performance and most of London's ballet critics signed a request that they should give one performance in *Giselle* for which these two stars are famous.

London audiences are grateful to have been able to see the fruits of their work in training and guiding the younger dancers. But what a pity to have had them both here for a whole month and, however busy they were, for them not to have shown their own talents as dancers.

New hope for Sundays

THE Sunday Ballet Club appeared to be going through a bad patch recently — not on stage, but off. Their production manager, Peter Jay, and their musical director, John Woolf, both recently retired from their very arduous and unpaid duties which had been taking up a lot of time and energy.

I hear though that the club has gained a welcome windfall in the shape of small but very useful grants from the Arts Council and the London County Council. These will make all the difference to the two remaining programmes which are to be given in the current membership year (up to end of March 1962).

The first of these programmes is unlikely to be shown until the late Autumn because of the difficulty in getting dancers with any spare time before then.

The Club comes in for a lot of kicks, but it is still fulfilling a very useful purpose, and if the grants are repeated (as everyone hopes they will be) in future years, then the outlook should be much brighter. Anyway, it seems essential that people with ideas should be given a stage on which to develop them and everyone learns as much from the failures as from the successes.

Niggling

EVERYONE knows what a niggling distraction toothache can be, and it is not difficult to imagine what effect it would have on a dancer's performance. Most hospitable people would, I most sincerely hope, have been glad that when some of the Kirov dancers needed dental treatment they got it promptly and efficiently from our National Health Service.

Not all think this way, however, so we were treated to the fatuous spectacle of questions in the House of Commons and a solemn assurance that the Minister would see whether he could not stop this sort of thing in future.

I wonder how the nigglers would have felt if they had heard that one of our dancers — even Fonteyn perhaps — had been prevented from appearing in Russia because of difficulty in getting necessary medical attention ? Would they then have been so high-minded about the whole matter ?

Stravinsky Winter

THE Royal Ballet is about to face up to a Stravinsky onslaught. Already with a number of Stravinsky ballets in and out of their repertory — *Petrushka* (Fokine), *The Firebird* (Fokine), *Scénes de Ballet* (Ashton), *Danses Concertantes* (MacMillan), *Le Baiser de la Fée* (MacMillan), *Agon* (MacMillan) — two more are planned to appear before the Spring.

Jerome Robbins, mounting his first ballet on a British company, is to create his own version of *Les Noces.* This work, first given with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska and designs by Goncharova by the Diaghilev Ballet in Paris in 1923, caused a certain amount of a stir at the time as it was a considerable departure from what was at that time considered to constitute " ballet ". The score was percussive, the choreography geometrically angular and the décor severe in the extreme. While Paris accepted it, with a few dissenting voices raised, Londoners found it far less acceptable though the work was vigorously defended by the man you would have thought the most unlikely — none other than H. G. Wells.

Mercifully, times have changed, and appreciation of new musical forms is more acute and *Les Noces* is recognised for what it is — an exciting and remarkable score. How Robbins intends to interpret

EXTREMES IN THE MIDLANDS: Left, students of the Cone-Ripman Arts Educational School in Masquerade, *a charmingly arranged small ballet by Grace Cone which was one of the highlights of the Midlands Festival in Coventry. Right, the most experienced member of the group, Anton Dolin, who danced* Le Roi Soleil, *arranged by Jack Carter and which, with his famous* Bolero, *was also a part of the festival.*

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this most truly "Russian" music is of course a secret at the moment, but his choice of designer is to be welcomed. It is none other than that most admirable constructivist, Sean Kenny. It would of course be this boy-most-likely American who would hit on this designer-most-likely Irishman. Why cannot we in England make immediate use of the talent that is in our midst as usually it is a foreigner who has to show us the way.

The other Stravinsky work to go into the Royal Ballet's repertory is *Persephone* which Ashton will create early next year. This is possibly Ashton's answer to those who of late have accused him, in *La Fille Mal Gardée* and *Les Deux Pigeons,* of "operetta" choreography, thus forgetting, it would seem, that he is one of the most versatile choreographers that this century has yet known. The work will probably have Svetlana Beriosova and David Blair in its principal rôles and Beriosova may know the unique distinction of being the first Royal Ballet ballerina to speak her part as well as dance it.

It is a curious coincidence, and possibly a pointer towards a new ballet trend, that both these Stravinsky ballets are choral. Taking into consideration also that the three works given by Western Theatre Ballet in Edinburgh also use singing voices, it may mean that we are in for a spate of choral-ballets. The only complication : are these ballets going to prove, with the extra personnel needed, too expensive to tour ? The fact that the Royal Ballet cannot afford to tour just *one* singer for *La Fête Etrange* might suggest that choral ballets will have to remain firmly home-based.

The Other Margot

WE in this country never saw Margot Lander dance, and it was our loss. Her career was spent entirely with the Royal Danish Ballet, and in 1942 she became the company's first prima ballerina, a title not previously awarded.

Just six years later she retired, aged 38, because she did not want to appear when she was no longer at her best.

Her most famous rôle, perhaps, was Swanilda in *Coppélia,* but she danced also in *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* in addition to her native repertory which included many works by her first husband, Harald Lander.

Many will regret that Margot Lander did not continue dancing at least until the Royal Danish Ballet came to London, but one must admire the integrity which made her stop when she did.

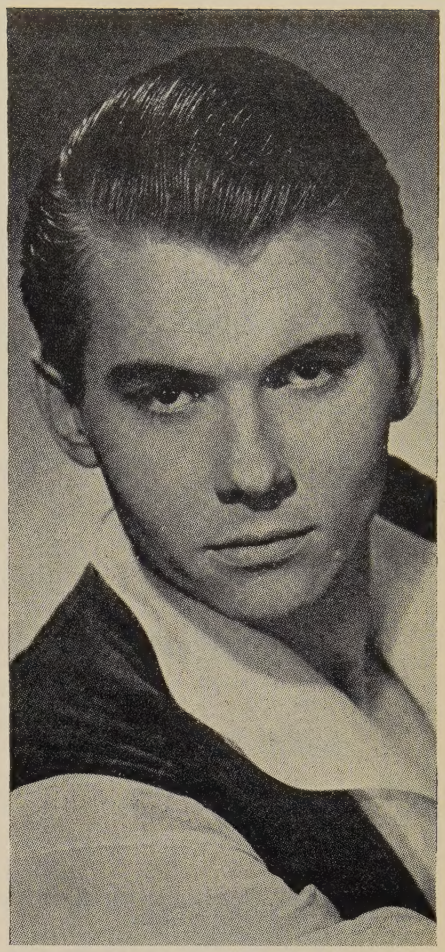
Now she is dead, at the sadly early age of 50 and it was in her native Copenhagen that she died on July 19.

Dancer of Today

DAVID ADAMS

BORN in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on November 16, 1928. Started to dance with Gweneth Lloyd in 1938, making his début as a child with the Winnipeg Ballet a year later. In 1946 he came to London to study at the Royal Ballet School, joining the then Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet later that year. In 1947 to 1948 he was a leading soloist with the Metropolitan Ballet, and on his return to Canada he worked first with the Winnipeg Ballet and later in musicals in Canada and the U.S. In 1951 he became a founder-member of the National Ballet of Canada, and has been a principal since its inception. Among the many ballets he has choreographed are Pas de Chance *(1954),* Pas de Deux Romantique *(1959) and* Pas des Fiancées *(1959).*

Creations : (for Metropolitan) Pas de Deux *in* Designs for Strings ; *Lust in* Fanciulla delle Rose; *Rôles: (for Metropolitan)* Pas de Trois *in* Swan Lake ; *Spectre in* Spectre de la Rose ; *Principal Rôle in* Dancers of Galanta ; *(for National Ballet) Albrecht in* Giselle ; *Siegfried in* Swan Lake ; *Prince in* Nutcracker ; *Franz in Coppélia ;* Les Sylphides ; *Leading rôle in* Les Rendezvous ; *Lover in* Lilac Garden ; *2nd Song in* Dark Elegies ; *Italian Cavalier in* Gala Performance ; *Painter in* Offenbach in the Underworld ; *Belaye in* Pineapple Poll.



IT is now more than ten years since the young David Adams was one of British Ballet's white hopes. In those days it was perhaps his astonishing elevation and effortless *ballon* that most impressed. But his masculinity and presence were already making themselves felt, and he was clearly a superb *premier danseur* in the making. Although we have seen *Designs with Strings* many times since its creation for the Metropolitan Ballet, no one has replaced the youthful poetry of Svetlanna Beriosova and Adams in the rôles they created. Now established as one of North America's most brilliant male classicists, it is a pleasure to welcome him back for a year's engagement with Festival Ballet.

happy birthday to...

		September	
Lucette Aldous	Ballet Rambert	26	
Yves Cousineau	Canadian National Ballet	27	
Colin Worth	Canadian National Ballet	27	
Sheila Melvin	London's Festival Ballet	28	
Hendrik Davel	London's Festival Ballet	28	
Flemming Flindt	Royal Danish Ballet	30	
		October	
Tanaquil le Clercq		1	
Eric Bruhn	Royal Danish Ballet	3	
Andrée Howard	British Choreographer	3	
Kenneth Bannerman	Ballet Rambert	4	
Serge Grigorieff		5	
Hélène Trailine	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	6	
Rachel Holland	Ballet Rambert	7	
Merle Park	The Royal Ballet	8	
Lois Smith	Canadian National Ballet	8	
Dusan Trninic	Belgrade Opera Ballet	10	
Jill Gregory	Royal Ballet Organisation	10	
Hans Meister	Canadian National Ballet	13	
Ronald Emblen	London's Festival Ballet	14	
Gaye Fulton	London's Festival Ballet	15	
Dusanka Sifnios	Monnaie Theatre, Brussels	15	
Marjorie Tallchief	Paris Opéra Ballet	19	
Susan Winterton	London's Festival Ballet	20	
Lydia Lopokova		21	

Dance and Dancers . . . IN FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

ON June 7, Claude Bessy and Attilio Labis danced *Giselle* for the first time. From the outset the young couple, who showed a full consciousness of the work's traditional demands, won attention by their physical beauty. If Labis may not possess the natural poetic temperament nor the emotional sensitivity which are able to make his romantic rôle really come alive, at least he fits better into *Giselle's* production and mood than he does in *Le Lac des Cygnes.* In her interpretation Claude Bessy has recaptured something of the Darsonval tradition. Though her acting is precise and clearly projected in Act I, her natural brilliance undoubtedly cramps her portrayal of this shy little peasant who is so quickly shattered. Attilio Labis is more himself under Albrecht's peasant disguise than under the doublet of the dreamer, Siegfried. In the second act, Bessy further demonstrates her elegance, though she is a little cold, while Labis is here most notable for the easy *ballon* he brings to his *variations.* Finally, Jacqueline Rayet brought remarkable authority and a delicate sense of style to her portrait of the Queen of the Wilis.

THEATRE DES NATIONS

ON May 23, the Ballet Peruano from Lima appeared at the Théâtre des Nations. Under the direction of Kaye MacKinnon, this troupe was in no way able to express the picturesque charm or striking qualities of Peruvian folklore.

On May 29 at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, Maurice Béjart's Ballet du XX° Siècle danced *Divertimento,* Ravel's *Bolero* and the Brecht/Weill *Seven Deadly Sins.* In the latter two works, Dusanka Sifnios, Ursula Kubler and the exquisite Janine Charrat were outstanding. Then on June 1 the company began a season at the Palais de Chaillot where a programme comprising *Pulcinella, Jeux de Cartes* and *Sacre du Printemps* paid homage to Stravinsky.

On June 9, the Ballet Filipinescas, a troupe formed by very young students, appeared at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier. This little amateur company, which is directed by Eleonor Orosa, can in no

way compete with its predecessor, Lucrecia Reyes Urtula's Bayanihan Company which danced here a year ago. But sometimes the charm of these carefree islands is so great that this free interpretation of Philippine traditions is moving in its freshness and graceful simplicity. Indeed *Binasuan* and *Singkil* (the wineglass and bamboo pole dances) are quite pleasant, though less brilliantly danced than in the Bayanihan versions. The ensembles move with the suppleness of youth : however, rather than the primitive or Moslem dances, we must praise the items which depict Catholic rites — the popular and childlike version of the Passion, their joyous Easter celebration, and the *Salubong,* which is the meeting between Christ and Mary. Finally, the vividly coloured costumes contributed much to this unpretentious programme.

The Ballets Modernes de Paris of Françoise and Dominique gave a return season at the Théâtre Recamier on June 5. Possessing neither shining personalities, nor a charm capable of making the styles of Isadora Duncan or Sakharoff appealing, or a vocabulary sufficiently rich, this company is obstinately suffering from cultivating a formula which leads nowhere. Deryk Mendel's *Epithalame,* though it loses much through the total absence of musical counterpoint, as danced by Françoise and Jean Bouffort is the work which deserves greatest interest. Yet what can be said for the endless and elaborate demonstrations of rudimentary gymnastics which go under the titles of *Mouvements en trois mouvements, Le jour où la terre tremblera,* and even the laborious comedy work, *Apprendre à marcher,* which is danced by Dominique and Paul d'Arnot ?

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas returned to the Théâtre des Champs Elysées on June 3. For its brilliant gala opening the stars, Hightower, Vyroubova and Daydé, Golovine and Polajenko were each allotted an act of *The Sleeping Beauty.* Then Maurice Chevalier delivered an eulogy to the memory of the Marquis.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
at Covent Garden

September
13 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)
15 *Lady and the Fool, Diversions* (World Première), *Jabez and the Devil* (World Première).
19 *Lady and the Fool, Diversions, Jabez and the Devil.*
23 (E) *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Blair).
26 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
28 *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Blair).
30 *Lady and the Fool, Jabez and the Devil, Diversions.*

October
3 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
4 *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Nerina, Blair).
9 *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird.*
13 *Ondine* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
17 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
19 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
21 *Petrushka, Diversions, Daphnis and Chloë.*

THE ROYAL BALLET
on tour

September
25 The Pavilion, Bournemouth.

October
2 The Pavilion, Torquay (2 weeks).
16 The New Theatre, Oxford (2 weeks)
30 The Opera House, Manchester.

November
6 The Kings Theatre, Glasgow.
13 The Kings Theatre, Edinburgh.
20 Theatre Royal, Newcastle.
27 The Royal Court, Liverpool.

December
4 The Lyceum, Sheffield.

BALLET RAMBERT

September
4 The Hippodrome, Bristol.
11 The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury.
18 Wimbledon Theatre, Wimbledon.
25 The Little Theatre, Middlesbrough.

October
2 The Empire Theatre, Sunderland.
9 The New Theatre, Hull.
16 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.
30 Theatre Royal, Exeter.

November
6 The Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
13 Theatre Royal, Bath.
20 The New Theatre, Cardiff.
27 Theatre Royal, Nottingham.

December
4 Theatre Royal, Norwich.

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET
at the Royal Festival Hall, London

August
24-26 *Swan Lake,* Act 2, *Schéhérazade pas de deux, Pas des Fiancées, Graduation Ball.*
28-Sept. 2 *The Snow Maiden.*
4-9 International Guest Artist Week. (Sept. 7, Annual Birthday Gala).
11-16 *The Snow Maiden.* End of season.

October
2 The Coventry Theatre, Coventry.
9 The Empire Theatre, Liverpool.
16 The Gaumont Theatre, Ipswich.
23 Theatre Royal, Norwich.
30 The Gaumont Theatre, Southampton.

November
6 The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham.

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

September
4 The Empire Theatre, Edinburgh. (three new creations for the Edinburgh Festival. See pages 29-31 of this issue).

LONDON BALLET

New ballet company directed by Walter Gore and starring Paula Hinton.

August
21 The Royal Hall, Harrogate.

September
4 Olympia Theatre, Dublin.
25 The Playhouse, Oxford.

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Monica Furlong writes about television for John O' London's. The other day she said of an actress on Monitor whom she liked, "Now I know why ornithologists wait hours in great misery and discomfort just to catch a glimpse of some rare and wonderful bird" — a statement which could easily be extended to cover her feelings generally about television.

Our other weekly critics are Peter Green on films, Alan Dent on spoken word records, Caryl Brahms on the theatre, Adrian Gaster on music, Burnett James on jazz.

But most of John O' London's is concerned with reviews of new books and articles about literature.

We have series of articles on, for example 'Great Writers of the Past', Living Writers, and one by John Creasey, which has aroused considerable correspondence, entitled 'In Search of Simplicity.'

John O' London's also has special issues from time to time. Our last two were 'American Book Number' (72 pages) and a poetry issue on 13th July which coincided with the Mermaid Festival.

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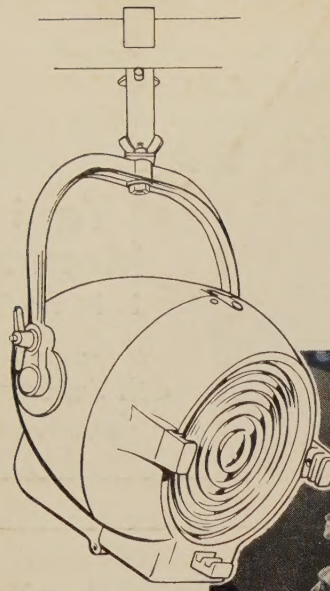

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